

WHAT'S UP ON THE DOCKS? • WATER WARS • MICHAEL MOORE'S NEW MOVIE

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

November 11, 2002

GEORGE PARRISH: Can the anti-war moment
become a movement?

DOUG IRELAND: Congress gives Bush
carte blanche



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Associate Publisher: Aaron Sarver

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Circulation Director: Peter Hoyt

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Editorial correspondence and letters should be sent to: 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Phone: (773) 772-0100. Fax: (773) 772-4180. E-mail: itt@inthesetimes.com.

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Editorial

The First Casualty

Last summer, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld gave a briefing to NATO allies, in which (appropriating Carl Sagan's quip about the existence of aliens) he said, "You know, we don't need absolute proof here. The absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence."

No, but in this case, there is an absence of truth.

Former U.N. weapons inspector Scott Ritter noted last summer in a speech in Boston that the Bush administration has created a "foundation for war that is built on a bed of lies." What Ritter didn't say is that the cement for that foundation has been provided by the national news media.

Public faith in the president's war strategy is based on the perception that Iraq poses an imminent threat—a perception that is in turn based on information provided by the media. *Time* recently set the terms of the debate with these headlines: "Let's wait to attack" and "No, let's not waste any time."

Jim Naureckas, at Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, notes that missing in the media coverage are questions to and answers from the Pentagon about how many lives will be lost in a war with Iraq, in both best-case and worst-case scenarios.

FAIR has spent these pre-war days chronicling the administration's disinformation campaign. On the September 18 *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, for example, Rumsfeld stated, "We have seen the situation with Iraq where they have violated some 16 U.N. resolutions and finally threw the inspectors out." Not true. The weapons inspectors withdrew from Iraq on their own accord.

In the August 3 *New York Times*, Barbara Crossette wrote, "Mr. Hussein accused the old commission of being an American spy operation and refused to deal with it." She omitted to mention that in 1999, her *Times* colleague Tim Weiner had reported, "United States officials said today that American spies have worked undercover on teams of United Nations arms inspectors." That fact is conveniently forgotten. It doesn't bolster the administration's case.

The media landscape is not uniformly dismal. On October 6, WBEZ, Chicago's NPR affiliate, broadcast Ritter's Boston speech, which had been distributed by David Barsamian's *Alternative Radio*. Ritter, a former Marine who voted for Bush, concluded:

This isn't about the national security of the United States. If it was, they would be able to substantiate the threat that Iraq posed. This is about domestic American politics. And you better wake up to that fact. Because what we have taking place in Washington, D.C., right now is that the national security of the United States of America has been hijacked by a handful of neoconservatives who are using their position of authority to pursue their own ideologically driven political ambitions, and the day we go to war for that reason is the day that we have failed collectively as a nation.

Ritter's point was underscored on October 10, when Knight-Ridder's Warren P. Strobbel and Jonathan S. Landay reported that more than a dozen "military officers, intelligence professionals and diplomats" in the Bush administration "charge that the administration squelches dissenting views and that intelligence analysts are under intense pressure to produce reports supporting the White House."

Strobbel and Landay give the example of Rumsfeld and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice maintaining that Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden have joined forces. On September 26, Rumsfeld claimed to have "bulletproof" evidence linking Iraq and al-Qaeda. However, according to the intelligence officials they interviewed, Rumsfeld's evidence was "based in part on intercepted telephone calls, in which an al-Qaeda member who apparently was passing through Baghdad was overheard calling friends or rela-

"Intelligence analysts are under intense pressure to produce reports supporting the White House."

tives." Further, according to these officials, "the intercepts provide no evidence that the suspected terrorist was working with the Iraqi regime or that he was working on a terrorist operation while he was in Iraq."

The officials all agreed that "the U.S. government has no dramatic new knowledge about the Iraqi leader that justifies Bush's urgent call to arms." But all feared retribution, so none would speak on the record.

Perhaps other media outlets will pick up and explore these allegations. Don't hold your breath. Once caught up in a web of lies, it is sometimes hard to wriggle out.

—Joel Bleifuss

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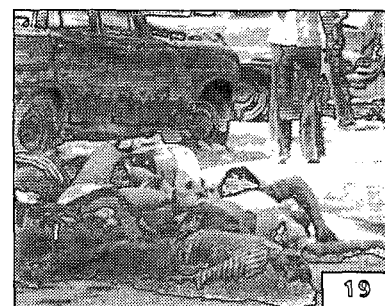
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By Jim Lobe

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COVER PHOTO: Steven Henry/Getty Images



Citizen Diplomats

David Moberg is right ("Alone at the Top," September 30). The U.S. government "establishes barriers to sustainable development that are very real." This is cause for discouragement. But it is also a compelling reason for U.S. citizens to go over the heads of our government. Where there are openings, and even where there are barriers, we need to build lines of communication to the leaders and governments of other countries. We need to speak for ourselves. As the threats to our planet grow, building this kind of direct citizen diplomacy is as necessary as influencing our own government. What's more, it could be an effective tool for influencing that government.

Joe Pandolfo
Mansfield Center, Connecticut

Limited Reparations

As someone who could be called a fan of Salim Muwakkil's writing, I was disappointed to see his favorable article on slavery reparations ("Not Quite Millions," September 30). I wonder why Muwakkil doesn't see why white Americans may consider it convenient—indeed, desirable—to pay reparations. Once they get their lump sum payoff, do African-Americans expect that they will ever again be able to attract the attention of white America regarding claims of racism? Once "accounts have been settled," whites will never again have to listen to the complaints of those who have now been "paid in full." In other words, African-Americans will not only have to shut up about very real inequities, now and for all time, but they will have effectively silenced themselves.

Once the money is gone, what then? Can we assume that reparations will be reinvested into the black community? What black community? Will it not instead be squandered, as white folks' money is, on the frivolous things that the dominant (white) culture peddles to all citizens, regardless of race? Will cultural hegemony cease to exist merely because every black citizen is \$20,000 or \$50,000 or \$1 million richer? And can you define "black"? Shall we return to the "one drop of Negro blood" days? Black culture has not walked so near the Klan since the days of—surprise!—Marcus Garvey and the "Back to Africa" movement.

Reparations are not the first step toward equality, they are the last effort of a hopeless culture. Having failed to extract from

Correction

In "Fascists for Che" (October 14), Bill White (holding sign in photo, right) was incorrectly identified as a member of the National Alliance. White's views are strictly his own.



America even the most basic opportunities, and having become a large part of what appears to be a permanent underclass, some African-Americans have decided to pursue an old hip-hop mantra: Get Money. Just as people who did not come from Africa could never go back there, people who never owned slaves cannot pay people who never were slaves. Burying your head in the sand and asking for a check is neither progressive nor productive.

Rather than agitating for what can only be described as a short-sighted, racially divisive, hopelessly confused, revisionist scam, we should be working to force our government to care for all its citizens, and to guar-

antee the rights promised us by the Constitution. Making good on that promise is the debt that the U.S. government owes us all.

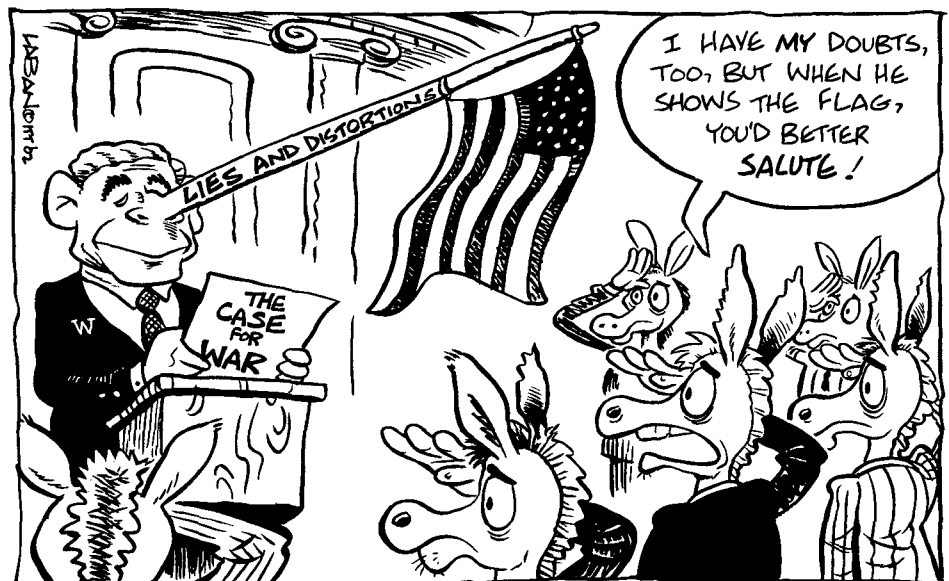
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Terry LaBan



Health Care for All?

Oregon's insurance industry fights universal coverage

By Geov Parrish

An initiative on November's ballot In Oregon may create the first program in the nation that would offer a Canadian-style universal health care program to all state citizens. It is the first time in eight years voters in any state will have the opportunity to approve such a system.

Measure 23, the "Oregon Comprehensive Health Care Finance Plan," has galvanized volunteers, gathered national attention, and drawn the fierce opposition of the health insurance and hospital industries. "It's been quite positive," says Britt McEachern of the Yes on 23 campaign. "We don't have a lot of money on our side; it's sort of a David and Goliath thing."

While the initiative claims more than 3,000 volunteers statewide and thousands of donors, the campaign against it has gotten only about 50 donations—primarily from the health insurance industry. Still, with more than \$400,000 in hand, those groups are outspending proponents by more than 10-to-1.

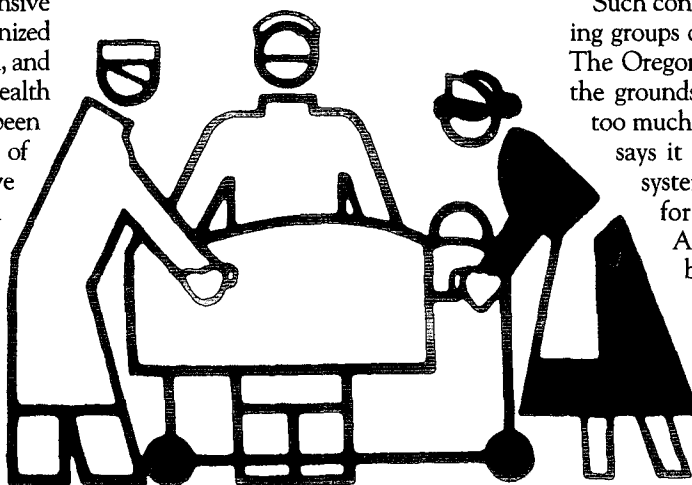
Kaiser Permanente, Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon, Pacificare, PacificSource, and ODS Health Plans have each donated more than twice the total received by the Yes on 23 campaign.

That money will be a powerful influence in the final weeks of the campaign. Oregon voters, according to most polls, are about evenly split; as the number of undecided voters has decreased, McEachern says, support has increased. An early October poll by the Portland *Oregonian* showed 40 percent supporting and 47 percent opposing. But McEachern claims the state's largest daily has been strongly biased against Measure 23, and that his group's own polling is at times showing over 50 percent in favor.

Nevertheless, opponents' deep pockets will almost certainly be put to use in coming weeks with a barrage of TV commercials designed to scare voters. To win,

proponents must hope their extensive volunteer networks and public education efforts—and anti-HMO resentment—can counter two simple mantras: "tax increase" and "socialized medicine."

For Americans accustomed to a system of jumbled and inadequate access to care and coverage, the scope of the Oregon plan is staggering. The agency that would supervise the system would cover virtually all medically necessary procedures for virtually all state residents, including those not now insured. That includes medical care for which, under existing HMOs or insurance plans, patients now must pay some or all of the cost: alternative practitioners, premiums, co-payments and out-of-pocket costs for doctors, dentists, home health



supplies, long-term care, and prescription drugs excluded by private health insurance and Medicare, among other procedures.

The price tag, not surprisingly, is enormous. In a state of 3.4 million residents, the plan would cost an estimated \$20 billion per year. Proponents claim two-thirds of that money would be covered by reimbursement from existing federal programs, leaving at least a third—critics say it's more like half—to be raised through higher income taxes. Those taxes would be progressive; the 25 percent of the population below 150 percent of the federal poverty level would be exempt from increases. But critics charge that the tax burden, and the spending, will skyrocket, particularly as residents realize they can obtain medical services they don't currently use—or cannot now afford.

"Right now in the United States, we're spending almost \$4,700 per person per

year on health care," says McEachern, who claims that tax increases will "be completely offset for most people by the money they save. You're going to limit co-payments, insurance premiums, deductibles; you're not going to pay out of pocket for prescription drugs. Most people are going to wind up saving a lot of money."

There is, of course, another potential catch: The federal government must agree to a waiver to redirect money now going to the state's existing low-income health system, the Oregon Health Plan, which Measure 23 would supplant. And the Bush administration, according to all observers, is likely to be hostile to a comprehensive, state-run system that essentially puts insurance companies out of business.

Such concerns have led to some surprising groups declining to back Measure 23. The Oregon AFL-CIO is opposing it, on the grounds that it would increase taxes too much for working people; the group says it wants a universal health care system, but wants employers to pay for it. The Oregon Medical Association, which has long backed some sort of universal health care coverage, has also come out against the measure, due to concerns over the cost and the likelihood of federal reimbursement.

Despite these criticisms, McEachern is upbeat; he can draw upon the discontent of voters alarmed and angered at the expensive and inadequate health care they now get from HMOs. He also sees Measure 23's passage as likely to spark similar efforts in other states. "Right now," he says, "there are 13 other states pursuing universal health care. Oregon is the furthest along. When it passes here, every one of those campaigns will kick into a higher gear."

The question, ultimately, is whether anger over the sorry state of Oregon's current health system is so pervasive that voters in a state historically willing to try new ideas will go for a system that is costly, unproven and likely to raise hackles with the federal government. But in the end, if Measure 23 wins, it may be due to its opposition. "[Measure 23] is not going to help the insurance companies one bit," McEachern says. "It's going to help citizens." ■

Murder in Chiapas

Low-intensity conflict continues

By Kari Lydersen

CHIAPAS, MEXICO—In a concrete and wooden hut in the tiny K'an Akil community of the highlands of Chiapas, the sound of soft rain on a tin roof mixes with the pungent scent of incense made from tree resin and the chanting of Hail Marys and Our Fathers in the Mayan tongue of Tzeltal.

The people gathered here are performing a mourning Mass for Antonio Mejia Vazquez, the town deacon and patriarch of the community. He acquired this small parcel of lush, rainy land about 30 years ago and, along with his brothers and their families, carved out a cornfield on a slope rising steeply above the huts, where chickens and hogs now meander, children

play and women in brightly embroidered traditional blouses and wool skirts make tortillas out of corn on a smoky wood fire.

In 1999, the 50 or so members of K'an Akil decided to declare themselves an autonomous community aligned with the Zapatistas, the guerrilla movement that emerged on New Year's Day 1994 by taking over the city of San Cristobal de las Casas and demanding the Mexican government recognize indigenous rights to autonomous government, land and education.

On August 26, Mejia was shot to death by several members of the Aguilares, a group variously described as "paramilitaries" or simply "thugs," in the latest of several attacks by paramilitaries on Zapatista supporters in Chiapas. In the past two months, violence has escalated in the region. While government officials deny the conflict is political, local NGO leaders and activists note that the low-intensity war being waged against the autonomous communities has intensified in the past few months, with the reported incursion of hundreds of new army and paramilitary troops in the Lacondon jungle and surrounding areas over the summer.

This "low-intensity warfare," a term coined by the government itself, consists of breaking down the resolve of communities through constant military presence, harassment and intimidation from paramilitary groups like the Aguilares. Zapatista supporters view the military and paramilitary presence as a key part of the government's plan to take over collective lands for projects like the Plan Puebla Panama, a proposed series of transportation corridors in the region.

Mejia's family couldn't even get to his body for a day and a half, since members of the Aguilar group continued to stand guard over the corpse and fire shots into the air. When they were finally able to recover Mejia's body, with the protection of a contingent of hundreds of Zapatista supporters from other communities, they found his ears had been sliced off and his left cheek cut away.

Community leaders say the Aguilares are trying to take over their land through a campaign of intimidation and terror. In December 2001, the Aguilares cut a water line that had connected K'an Akil to a spring in the mountains. They demanded 8,000 pesos (about \$800) to reconnect the water supply, money the town didn't have. Tensions escalated, and the Aguilares began to make death threats against Mejia and his family.

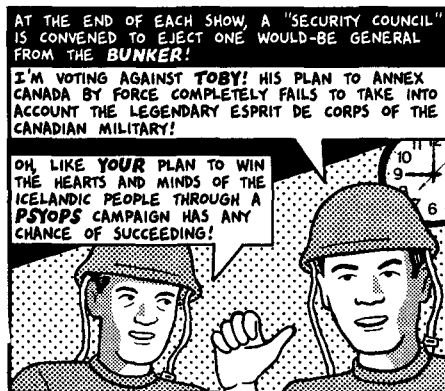
Mejia was one of four Zapatista supporters murdered in August. In all four cases, the murderers, whose identities are well-known, continue to enjoy almost complete immunity from prosecution. Mexican President Vicente Fox and Chiapas Gov. Pablo Salazar have both publicly stated recently that no armed paramilitary organizations exist in Chiapas. Locals say that, to the contrary, the paramilitaries are as strong as ever and receiving weapons and other clandestine support from the military.

Since Fox unseated Mexico's long-time ruling party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the president's campaign promise to solve the Chiapas conflict in "15 minutes" has proved completely hollow. "The paramilitaries have lost some support since the PRI is no longer in power," says Ruben Moreno of the Chiapas Community Defenders Network. "But even though the links aren't as direct, it is evident that they are supported by the government through total impunity."

Before Mejia, two Zapatista supporters

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



TM TOMORROW 10-16-02

were murdered August 25 in the community of Amaytik during a raid by the paramilitary group OPDIC, an organization with branches throughout Chiapas that claims to be an indigenous rights group and is vocal in its opposition to the Zapatistas. The Center for Political Analysis and Social and Economic Research has done a study noting the presence of OPDIC chapters in areas key to government-sponsored development projects like the Plan Puebla Panama, a fact they say is no coincidence.

Zapatista supporter Jose Lopez Santiz was also shot to death in August. He was gunned down in his cornfield in front of his two sons, who identified his killers as friends of a wealthy local landowner. The Zapatista community had "recuperated" part of the landowner's holdings to work as their own.

Thousands of Zapatista supporters held protests calling for justice in the case. In a public statement, Gov. Salazar himself urged protesters to have faith in the judicial system. Community leaders note that after Santiz's wife and brother went to the police in Altamirano, they tried to prevent the



Zapatista rebels are under increasing threat in Chiapas.

body from being examined and declared his death was caused by a falling tree.

The Zapatistas have not issued a statement since April 2001, when the government failed to meet their demands for autonomy after the march of tens of thousands of Zapatistas and their supporters to Mexico City. They are expected to break their silence soon in response to the killings, as well as a September decision by the Mexican Supreme Court that dismissed

challenges to the controversial Indigenous Rights Law passed last year, which critics say offers very few indigenous rights and undermines stronger existing laws.

The Zapatistas have also found some of their support bases, such as ARIC Independiente, the cattle ranchers' union, and ORCAO, the coffee growers' union, eroded by Salazar's program offering incentives for collective landholders to privatize their land. The autonomous communities vehemently oppose this trend, saying it makes it easier for the government and corporations to buy up land for development and exploitation of natural resources.

Meanwhile, those who live in K'an Akil live with the immediate fear and grief caused by the paramilitary presence. "We are afraid of these groups," a spokesman from the community told a group of human rights observers from the Mexico Solidarity Network in late September. "We can't work because of the threats. The women are afraid to leave their homes at all, and children can't go to school. The paramilitaries keep doing this to us night and day." ■

IN SHG

"Patriot" Watch

Administrators at the University of California, San Diego, took interpretation of the USA Patriot Act into their own hands in mid-September. The university ordered a student group, the Ché Café Collective, to remove links on the group's Web site to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), saying the link violated the section of the act that prohibits providing "material support" to groups on the State Department's foreign terrorist list. "We are concerned that public resources are not used to promote or assist a terrorist organization in violation of federal law," administrators said. "This is a new law, and until it is declared unconstitutional, we are required to comply with it."

UCSD retracted the request when the Free Expression Network sent a letter, signed by nine groups, including the American Association of University Professors and the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression (ABFEE), denouncing the action. Says ABFEE President Chris Finan, "We're glad they've acknowledged their mistake."

But the university *now* says the group must remove files from the university server that contain information about Turkey's leftist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), another group on the foreign terrorist list. "We are concerned the university is continuing to insist the students take down content on the Web site for the same reason they demanded the links be taken down before," Finan says. "We are investigating further. ... and if we believe this is a First Amendment violation, we will send them

another letter." The university threatened another student group, Groundwork Books, with disciplinary action after it posted a link to the PKK earlier this fall.—KR

BY KRISTIE REILLY
AND ALISON PARKER

House Approves More Abortion Restrictions

In late September, the House passed a bill that would allow all hospitals and other health providers, including insurance companies, to refuse to perform or pay for abortions without losing federal funding.

The "Abortion Non-Discrimination Act" passed 229 to 189, with most members voting along party lines. The bill gives hospitals and clinics the right to refuse abortion counseling to women, and allows those refusals to be made for any reason, not just on religious grounds. Abortion rights supporters say it would significantly cut back women's access to a legal procedure. "The bill discriminates against women who seek abortions and hog-ties health care providers who want to give their patients full reproductive health care," says Gloria Feldt, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

This is only the latest and most aggressive attempt to restrict reproductive rights: In July, the House also passed a ban on late-term abortion procedures. Later this year, both bills will go to the Senate, where their future will depend largely upon the outcome of the November 5 elections.—AP

PRI Outfoxed

Unions fight entrenched corruption in Mexico

By Jorge Luis Sierra and Rick Rockwell

MEXICO CITY—Hard-line political conservatives aren't known for their finesse with union workers, but Mexican President Vicente Fox is proving he has a special touch.

At the end of September, Fox not only averted an unprecedented and potentially crippling strike by oil workers, but he dealt a blow to his political rivals. During September, union chief Carlos Romero Deschamps had called for a strike that would have shut down Petroleos Mexicanos (PEMEX), the state-controlled oil monopoly, for the first time since its founding in 1938 and demanded a 15 percent wage boost.

Fox displayed his political charm by traveling to oil platforms to rub shoulders with the PEMEX workers. Before the new contract was settled, the president had many workers groups vocally denouncing the union's longtime bosses. The men who run the oil workers union are ardent supporters of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which Fox unexpectedly toppled two years ago during presidential elections. Until Fox's victory, the PRI had run Mexico for more than 71 years.

Workers, however, may not be such strong supporters of the party. Surprisingly, they were willing to settle for a lower figure—a 7.3 percent wage and benefit hike, a compromise from the original government offer of 5.5 percent—with the condition the government clean up union corruption. Workers have accused Romero of charging them special fees to acquire and keep their jobs or union positions. Union leaders have also been accused of

skimming funds from union coffers, including the special fund for workers' burials.

Rank-and-file critics point to intimidation by union leadership that they say has been intensifying since a mysterious car accident in April. Union leaders who were expected to denounce Romero in a congressional investigation of the union were killed in the accident, hit head-on by a large truck. Similar accidents were used in Mexico throughout the '90s to squelch opposition political leaders and supporters of the Zapatistas.

Members of Fox's administration also accused the union of threatening to strike in retaliation for investigations into union corruption. The government is investigating charges that Romero illegally diverted \$170 million from PEMEX into the campaign fund of PRI presidential candidate Francisco Labastida during the 2000 elections. Both Fox's conservative National Action Party (PAN) and Mexico's leftist Democratic Revolutionary Party have

(((((((((((APPALL-O-METER)))))))))))

Pistols for Four 2.6

Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan has challenged George W. Bush and Dick Cheney to a double duel against Saddam Hussein and an unnamed Iraqi vice president. "A president against a president and vice president against a vice president and a duel takes place, if they are serious," Ramadan told The Associated Press. "And in this way we are saving the American and the Iraqi people."

Ramadan suggested Kofi Annan as a judge. We've mulled this one over and cannot discern a downside.

At Your Service 4.9

It's a good thing that welfare-to-work training programs exist, because the down-and-out might otherwise never get a chance to work at McDonald's for free. But New York City's welfare program came through for Jose Mercado, father of six, who lost his job as a pasta maker early this year. According

to the *New York Post*, the city's Human Resources Administration placed Mercado in a "food service training internship" at the McDonald's franchise at the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum.

One can imagine new worlds of cutting-edge food-service technique opening up to the unemployed man, but Mercado was less than grateful. He and two other welfare recipients worked five-and-a-half hours a day, three days a week, for close to seven weeks, and were not paid a cent. Mercado complained but was told that if he didn't flip burgers, his checks would be cut off.

Still, Mercado didn't like the idea of profitable mega-corporations taking advantage of free labor in the guise of giving the unfortunate a hand. The city eventually withdrew welfare workers from McDonald's, the first for-profit enterprise to use them. "You try different things," commented an official. "Sometimes they work, sometimes they don't."

BY DAVE MULCAHEY

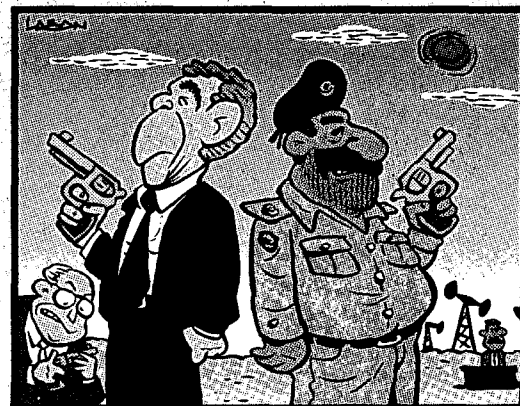
We Report, You Decide 6.7

A bunch of enterprising college graduates claims to have sold more than 300,000 copies of videos featuring brawling homeless men. "Bumfights," as their series is known, retails on the Internet for \$19.99, and features (to quote promotional copy) "crackheads" and "winos" fighting, lighting their hair on fire, smacking their heads into stuff, riding shopping carts down flights of stairs and other feats, all in exchange for chump change and liquor.

Great fun, of course, until somebody breaks a leg, as happened to one bum, or worse. Now two of the videos' subjects, Donald Brennan,

53, and Rufus "the Stunt Bum" Hannah, 48, are suing the producers for \$100,000 in general damages, plus punitive damages, for taking advantage of the plaintiffs' "mental, emotional and physical disabilities." At least two of the filmmakers have been arrested.

For their part, the producers have fled to the last refuge of the cultural bagman. "Fights are part of their culture," anthropologically astute producer Ty Beeson, 24, explained to CNN. "It's a way for them to vent their anger. We're simply there to video it."



promised to hold congressional hearings about allegations of corruption.

Fox described the battle against the union bosses and the remnants of the once all-powerful PRI as part of the fight for democracy in Mexico. Richard Boucher, a State Department spokesman, chimed in, saying, "This struggle is fundamental for the question of development and good government."

Combating corruption has headed Fox's list of priorities since his inauguration. However, the president's critics note the current flap also diverted attention from the Federal Electoral Institute's investigation of Fox's own campaign finances. The institute is investigating both the PAN's and the PRI's finances from the 2000 campaign. Congressional leaders fear the union's political influence has slowed the IFE's investigation and have promised to hold hearings about that issue as well.

Both the PAN and PRI are posturing for the 2003 midterm elections, where the balance of power in Mexico's Congress will be decided. Fox lacks a clear majority in Congress, and the PAN hopes to use the corruption investigations as fuel to gain seats. By getting the union bosses to buckle, Fox may have won his most significant political victory against the PRI since he was elected. ■

This Land Is My Land

Russian farmers oppose private ownership

By Fred Weir

TOLPAKI, RUSSIA—When Russia's parliament passed a revolutionary law last summer legalizing the sale and purchase of farmland for the first time since the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, many of Russia's tiny number of struggling family farmers weren't cheering. In fact, those the measure was ostensibly intended to help say private ownership of land will destroy them.

"This law will benefit only a few rich oligarchs, because they're the only ones in this country who have any cash," says Alexander Poprov, who has built a successful private farm on land leased from a failed Soviet-era collective. "Ownership

is an empty symbol. What's important is who possesses the land and how he uses it. Just because someone can afford to buy land, it doesn't make him a farmer."

Private property in land has been the subject of the country's toughest post-Soviet political struggle, and one which may be far from over. Private ownership of agricultural land has existed, at least in theory, since former President Boris Yeltsin handed over control of almost all Russia's arable land—400 million hectares—to the members of state and collective farms a decade ago. But they have not been permitted to buy or sell the land until now.



Alexander Poprov

Polls show at least half of Russians oppose private ownership of land, and a majority of collective farmers, who still control three-fourths of Russia's arable land, are dead set against the idea. The Communists had threatened to force a national referendum to revoke the law, one experts believed they could win, but the pro-Kremlin Duma passed

a special law in September blocking such referenda. "Land is an emotional issue for most Russians," says Ivan Klimov of the Public Opinion Foundation in Moscow. "They don't think of it as a commodity, but as the foundation of national power and wealth."

The new law, which comes into effect on January 1, 2003, was intended to bring about an agricultural revolution in Russia by enabling outside investors to purchase land and create big, efficient capitalist agribusinesses. But there are two remaining obstacles. One is the approximately 30 million Russians who still live on the land, many of whom own shares in their former collective and state farms. The second is the private farmers, most of whom have built their businesses over the past decade by the entrepreneur's textbook: leasing collective farm fields, painstakingly improving the land and scrimping to purchase new machinery.

Poprov, a former helicopter pilot, will lose his business if the land he works on is sold. "The collective farmers who hold the title to this land may now find it much more attractive to sell it," he says. "I have no money. I put all my profits back into operations. Everything I've built will be lost if I can't get access to land."

Russia has no developed banking system, nor does the government have any



"Snorting" at war: Armed with a pig nose and a giant "Pentagon Pig," ice cream baron Ben Cohen stops in Chicago's Lincoln Park to lead a "Snort-in" against a war in Iraq. Cohen is traversing the country to kick off True Majority, a national, grassroots, Internet-based movement to reorient our national priorities. Check it out at www.TrueMajority.com.

planned program for providing farmers with cheap credits to purchase land. "Some oligarch will come in here, buy up all the land and offer to make me his serf," Poprov says. "I'll say no thanks, and I'll be back in the street with nothing again."

The Kremlin introduced a last-minute amendment to the law banning foreigners from purchasing Russian farmlands, ostensibly to appease the Communists. Many experts believe the change was really aimed at preventing Chinese entrepreneurs from buying into the vast and largely deserted expanses of Siberia.

Since the Soviet Union's collapse, many efforts to promote private farming have foundered on a lack of resources. With few paved roads, storage facilities or processing industries in rural areas, as much as 40 percent of collective farm produce is still wasted between field and shop counter. Add to that Russia's short growing season, finicky climate and poor soils, and "Farming in Russia is not for the faint at heart," says Anatoly Kibeka, a former professor who now runs his own private farm.

But for many, the collective farms represent not just the past, but the only existing anchor of stability and source of income in a rural wilderness of hopelessness and poverty. Under the new law, poor collective farmers, without the money to start their own farms, may be compelled to sell their shares to speculators. "Look what happened in the '90s—all Russia's industries and resources were grabbed by a few rich oligarchs," says Yuri Savinok, an official of the conservative Agrarian Party, whose electoral base is collective farmers. "Does anyone doubt the same will happen when land goes on the block? Ordinary Russians will be dispossessed again."

Indeed, "just about everything in Russia has been privatized already, except land," says Andrei Ryabov, an analyst with the Carnegie Endowment in Moscow. "It is big business that lobbied for this law."

Even liberals, who support an open market in land, say the law might end up compounding the problems in Russia's deeply depressed and tradition-bound countryside. "You shouldn't confuse this law with comprehensive land reform," says Yevgenia Serova of the liberal Institute for the Economy in Transition. "Russia needs to take careful steps that will gradually put land into the hands of those who can use it most efficiently. This law might well have the opposite effect." ■

Pay to Play British nuclear firm caught buying access in Washington

By Solomon Hughes

LONDON—A firm wholly owned by the British government has been funding American political parties in return for meetings with senior energy officials for years. The only problem: The company, British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., forgot to tell Britain's Parliament—and this summer, Parliament found out.

BNFL handed over soft-money contributions to U.S. political parties through two U.S. subsidiaries, BNFL Inc. and Westinghouse Electric, an energy company it acquired in 1999. Over the past four years, the firm gave \$300,000 to both Democrats and Republicans. The majority of the contributions went to Republican functions, from the National Senatorial Campaign Committee and a Republican golf tournament to \$5,000 to attend a party dinner in New Mexico. The company had also spent more than \$820,000 on congressional lobbyists since 1998.

The results of BNFL's efforts are apparent in an energy bill currently being debated in Congress that would give some \$2.6 billion in tax breaks and awards to the nuclear industry. The company's political donations also bought them key audiences with Vice President Dick Cheney and his staff. BNFL is pushing for the building of new U.S. nuclear power stations and to license disposal of the resulting waste. In public statements this summer, BNFL's chairman Hugh Collum warmly welcomed the Senate's green light for nuclear disposal at Yucca Mountain.

Papers released to the National Resources Defense Council under the Freedom of Information Act reveal numerous meetings between BNFL and U.S. officials. The NRDC sued Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham earlier this year to gain access to papers detailing Cheney's "Energy Task Force" meetings, which were held largely in secret with energy company representatives.

The documents showed BNFL second-in-command Charles Pryor Jr. and other

nuclear industry executives met with Abraham on March 20, 2001, "to discuss nuclear energy's role in the national energy policy." This was one in a series of meetings intended to help the Bush administration draw up its "Energy Roadmap" for the task force.

In a letter to Cheney seeking help in authorizing new reactor designs the firm hopes to market internationally, Pryor asks the vice president "to address the complex, time-consuming regulatory hurdles that must be overcome by new, advanced nuclear plants."

In the same letter, Pryor requested \$36 million in public funding for research into his firm's new reactors. The request, combined with campaign contributions sent straight from the British Treasury, seems to have worked. In February of this year, Abraham announced a new program, "Nuclear Power 2010," which he described as "a new ... partnership between my department and the nation's electric utility industry." The partnership met every one of the requests in BNFL's letter and even increased the research fund to \$38.5 million.

BNFL's relationship with the Republicans caused a firestorm in the British Parliament when articles were published in the *Observer* revealing BNFL's payments this summer. Members of Parliament called the cash-for-influence exchange "state-sponsored bribery." Labour MP David Chaytor said, "The fact that a company owned by the British government ... is making massive political payments in the United States is a scandalous waste of public money. The fact that the timing of this spending relates to key policy decisions raises disturbing questions."

Many parliamentarians were already suspicious of BNFL—in 1999, the firm was discovered falsifying crucial safety tests at their main nuclear plant—and in July, all further payments were banned. They fear the firm wants to use the licensing of new reactors and waste dumps in the United States as a way of forcing through new dumps and reactors in the United Kingdom.

In their defense, BNFL officials told the *Independent* in July that the payments were "part of the way business is done in the United States. It's a sort of lobbying. ... Every competitor in the United States is doing this." ■

Cycle of Violence

Battered women who kill their abusers are being jailed

By Silja J.A. Talvi

When Maria Suarez was just 16 years old, the rural-Mexico-born teen-ager was sold for \$200 to a 68-year-old Californian, Anselmo Covarrubias. The year was 1976. On her third day at Covarrubias' home, still assuming she had been brought there to assist him in household chores and cooking, Suarez was raped by her employer. From that day forward, Suarez endured five years of abusive and seemingly perpetual sexual, physical and emotional servitude.

In 1981, Covarrubias was bludgeoned to death. Despite concrete evidence of the abuse she had endured at the hands of Covarrubias, Suarez, then 21, and two of Covarrubias' tenants were convicted of first-degree murder in July 1982. Suarez was sentenced to life in prison.

Self-defense is the only legally justifiable reason for murder, regardless of the gender of the killer. Yet even in clear cases of self-defense, women who kill their abusers are often accused—and convicted—of first-degree murder, and they end up spending most of their lives in prison. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence reports that the average prison sentence of men who kill their female partners is two to six years, while women who kill their partners are sentenced, on average, to 15 years in prison.

In addition, even with evidence of severe assault at the hands of their abusers, battered women who claim self-defense in criminal trials are acquitted only 25 percent of the time, according to Harvard's leading domestic violence researcher, Angela Browne.

"One thing that I've been struck by in these cases where women kill their abusers is that prosecutors invariably charge the women with first-degree murder," says Nancy Lemon, author of *Domestic Violence Law* and a law lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley. "The facts often don't fit that, however, and women are still convicted of first-degree murder, with no actual evidence of premeditation."

States do not keep detailed statistics for this category of violent crime, but current estimates place the number of women imprisoned for murdering their abusers between 2,000 and 4,000. Nationwide, the Department of Justice estimates that 4.8 million intimate partner rapes and assaults are perpetrated against women annually. Perhaps most surprisingly, the vast majority of these assaults do not result in women killing—or even causing severe injury—to their abusive partners.

California is one of the first states to enact laws that address domestic violence in murder cases. In 1991, the state began to allow expert testimony in homicide cases related to domestic violence. And in 2001, changes to the California penal code went into effect directing parole boards to take histories of domestic violence into consideration during hearings.

Suarez's case was one of those warranting a second look. In May 2002, the state parole board examined the results of an investigation into her case and decided that the woman who had already served more than two decades behind bars at the California Institution for Women deserved parole.

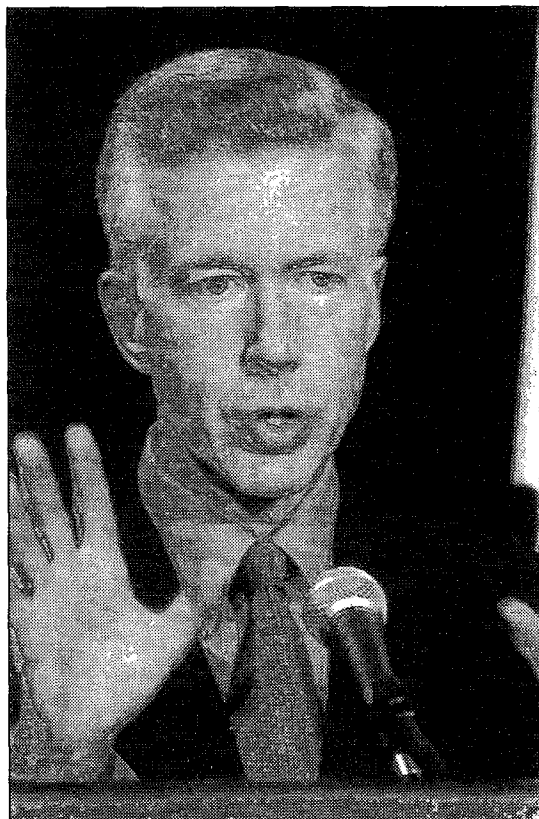
But one month later, Democratic Gov. Gray Davis overturned the board's recommendation. The denial of parole devastated Suarez and her family, says Olivia Wang, domestic violence project coordinator with the San Francisco-based Legal Services for Prisoners with Children. "Maria has been in prison for 21 years now," Wang says. "If Gov. Davis was going to let anyone out, it should have been her."

The movement to free battered women who have killed in self-defense—and who have already served long sentences—has built up steam in California, where Davis is increasingly under fire for his perceived "no parole" policy. According to critics, Davis, who is vying for re-election, is refusing to release eligible parolees for fear of tarnishing his law-and-order image. Altogether, out of 123 prisoners recommended for parole by the review board during Davis' tenure, only two have been released. Both were women who had killed their batterers; Davis denied parole

to nearly a dozen other women recommended for similar reasons.

The California Coalition for Battered Women in Prison has launched a statewide campaign in response. "We're saying that they've endured enough," Wang says. "Justice isn't being served when we leave these women to waste away in prison for the rest of their lives."

Most women jailed for killing in self-defense in the rest of the country do not have such passionate advocates. In the



Gray Davis says no to parole.

meantime, Suarez sits in prison, pinning her hopes on her next parole hearing. In interviews with the parole board last year, the husband and wife who had rented from Covarrubias (and who are also in prison for his murder) testified that Suarez had not, in fact, committed the murder.

"Davis is not only punishing me, he is now punishing my entire family," Suarez wrote in a letter shortly after learning her parole had been denied. "As for me, I am going to adjust. I know how to serve time ... I will use my pain and anger to help me fight this negative situation in the most positive ways I can." ■

They Doth Protest Too Much

By Ana Marie Cox

An incredibly successful protest took place September 22. Activists around the country attracted attention to the unjust actions of their government and its leader—a man whose rule many consider illegitimate and whose policies they likened to fascism.

I am speaking, of course, of the largest rally in British history, when 400,000 people converged on London to protest a proposed ban on fox hunting. The event's organizers—the Countryside Alliance—called it the “Liberty and Livelihood” march, and it's tough to predict which group would be more offended by the comparison to the anti-World Bank protests that took place in Washington the next weekend. Both protests were in fact about much more. The World Bank protests were for many an opportunity to rail against Bush policies on the environment and Iraq. Likewise, the pro-fox-hunting pilgrims used the march to agitate in favor of target pistol shooting and the Equine Grass Sickness Fund.

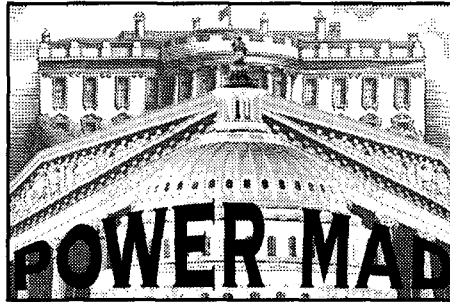
The anarchists and peace activists who came to Washington might be upset by the Countryside Alliance's causal appropriation of “fascist” to describe Tony Blair's support for a ban on fox hunting, though not necessarily because they disagree on the label. But there is a difference between calling someone a fascist because he favors a “pre-emptive” war on Iraq, and calling someone a fascist because he thinks grown adults should find something better to do with their time than putting on funny hats and chasing small animals through the woods.

But it is also tough to ignore the cor-duroy and hacking jacket contingent's massive turnout: They got about 15 times more protesters than the World Bank folks did. (The most generous reports put the final number in Washington at about 5,000.) That the Countryside Alliance spent a million pounds promoting their event largely explains the discrepancy, but it's still difficult to avoid the cynical conclusion that it is easier to protest in favor of a lifestyle than it is to protest against the heavy-handed economic tactics of an unaccountable oligarchy.

The easy rejoinder to that, however, is that protesting the oligarchy has itself

become a lifestyle, a pastime most people find as anachronistic and irrelevant as fox hunting, if not more so. At least fox hunting, as the Countryside Alliance might remind us, provides employment.

In pursuing their street theater/giant puppet/bicycle rally tactics of direct con-



frontation, liberal activists are more than just “stuck in the past,” lost in some Vietnam flashback or civil rights dream. They are, in fact, moving backward, enamored of methods that alienate large chunks of a potentially sympathetic populace.

D.C.'s local alternative weekly, the *Washington City Paper*, addressed the protests with a “Best Of” cover story, the same format usually reserved for citywide popularity contests. This is a rubric ideally suited to superficiality, and the activists profiled inside did little to disappoint. Caught lofting a black flag while playing hacky sack, the winner of the “Best Slacker Pose (Male)” explained its significance thusly: “Just to show how damned good I am at hacky sack!” Even more disappointing: When a planned “quarantine” of the World Bank was frustrated by a low turnout, Loren Finkelstein, the spokeswoman for Mobilization for Global Justice, simply spun in a fashion that would make Ari Fleischer green with envy. The quarantine was “just one of our protests,” she claimed, alleging success with “the imagery goal—sending the message, projecting the image.” (She earned runner-up honors for “Best Corporate Flack in Radical Drag.”)

The activists also scored in their stated goal of shutting the city down. And as a commuter who sat in traffic all morning listening to sirens wail in an almost deserted downtown, I can attest to a partial victory. They forced police to close Connecticut

Avenue—a main thoroughfare—by placing a suspicious package in the middle of the road. A small group also blocked traffic on the 14th Street Bridge for about 20 minutes—admittedly a blink of an eye as measured in Beltway commute terms. Perhaps most audaciously, the mere presence of the protesters spurred the city to remove 63 of the 200 garish “Party Animal” public art-cum-propaganda elephants and donkeys from open areas—the only act for which I think anyone actually living in D.C. was grateful.

For the most part, however, the protests were ineffectual and ignored. All this is especially disappointing because the issues raised by the World Bank and by the administration's increasingly imperious approach to policy-making (whether waging unilateral war with Iraq or creating a Justice Department whose concern with civil rights begins and ends with the Second Amendment) are more relevant and intelligible to most Americans than ever before.

Approached in almost any other way, these protests could have capitalized on still-untapped anger about corporate malfeasance: What is the World Bank, anyway, but a kind of global board of directors—as independent from popular oversight as WorldCom and even more deserving of it?

Polls show Americans to still be deeply divided about “regime change” in Iraq. In London, there is less division, with between 150,000 and 400,000 protesters—police say the former, organizers the latter—turning out the weekend after the World Bank gathering for an ant-war march. There might be a way to attract even more supporters in the United States: The latest numbers indicate a majority of Americans believe a country should invade another only if attacked first, and 70 percent think that Bush should wait for a congressional approval before acting. Framed not as a universal “war is bad” truism, but as a call for reason and caution, an anti-unilateralism event might draw people more PTA than PETA. It would look more like the “Liberty and Livelihood” march and less like Seattle.

That's what the movement needs. Insular and self-congratulatory, the radicals who are now the public face of leftism

in this country present its worst side. But the only way to take back activism is to become active, to stop mocking the Black Bloc and start making them seem less representative—if for no other reason than it would disarm critics who prefer to debate caricatures rather than ideas.

But what I hated the most about last month's events in D.C. was how they embarrassed me about my own politics. I would like to believe there are others out there who felt the same way, but I won't know unless I meet them on the street—preferably, marching in the same direction. ■

When Police Attack

By David Graeber

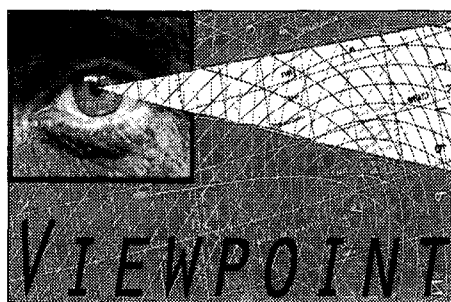
I spent 15 hours handcuffed on a bus with 44 other people, all charged with a crime that everyone, including the police, knew perfectly well we did not commit. At the Police Academy outside Washington where we were taken on September 27, stood a line of 13 buses, each one full of 45 innocent people. As sleepy Metro drivers slouched over the wheels, riot cops checked to make sure everyone's hands were securely fastened behind their backs. It didn't feel particularly glorious, but in doing so we pretty much shut down the IMF.

For months, the Anti-Capitalist Convergence (ACC) had been planning a "People's Strike" to correspond with the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank. This time, rather than a vain attempt to shut down the meetings themselves, they would shut down the city, thus bringing home (they hoped) the intimate connections between the IMF, financial institutions and government agencies headquartered in the capital.

Not only did the ACC spell out beforehand that they intended an explicitly nonviolent action, but they took the rather unconventional step of asking people not to form a "Black Bloc" at all, recommending "business casual" as a way of blending in with the urban population. They also came up with a set of demands, from ending the "colonial status" of the District of Columbia to canceling all international and personal debt.

Mobilization for Global Justice, the traditionally more moderate, NGO-friendly (but also predominantly anarchist) group threw their action together a bit more belatedly, but managed to mobilize large numbers for a permitted march that (it was hoped) would end with an attempt to "quarantine" the World Bank and IMF by surrounding the buildings with activists garbed in chemical-safe jumpsuits.

A week before, Assistant Police Chief Terrence W. Gainer told Congress that the threat posed by the ACC required consideration of "pro-active" measures. On the following Friday, we found out what that meant. As the marches began, hoards of police, hundreds imported from cities like New York and Chicago, started systematically surrounding and arresting everyone.



The climax came, ironically enough, in Freedom Plaza—which organizers had designated a "safe space" for those who couldn't risk arrest—when hundreds of riot police appeared, cut off all exits, held hundreds of people for an hour as they begged to leave, beat anyone who linked arms and finally hauled off everyone (including medics, National Lawyer's Guild legal observers and a number of construction workers and bike messengers who just happened to be around).

After 650-odd illegal arrests on Friday, it was fairly easy to terrorize crowds on Saturday; even on a legal march to the World Bank building, only those couple thousand willing to risk spending the night in jail actually finished the route.

It might have seemed a weekend of frustration and defeat. But what we really learned was this: While it might be possible for police to completely stop us from shutting down a meeting, in order to do so, they effectively shut down the meeting themselves.

IMF/World Bank meetings fulfill two major functions. They are moments of ceremonial display and occasions for networking. The real action is at the parties, where bankers and consultants, executives and economists sip cocktails, exchange phone numbers, and brainstorm new projects and ideas. But this year, a planned week of meetings had to be limited to two days; ceremonial events were reduced to gray-suited figures cowering behind an army of riot police; most of the parties were canceled; and much of the communication had to be done via the Internet from sites outside of the city entirely. At every stage the message was clear: Business as usual was now a thing of the past.

In light of all this, the police's open defiance of legality—on the buses, we were finally charged with "failure to obey" a police order—makes a bit more sense. Just a few years ago, we were still hearing the line that "free trade," privatization and corporate greed were going to produce a world of such unimaginable wealth that even the poorest would eventually benefit. Now, the actual message from the meetings themselves is the fact that the neoliberal world economy seems to be hovering somewhere between tailspin and crash.

Pretense therefore has been brushed aside. Pieties about free markets leading to a flowering of peace, democracy and justice have been replaced by the Orwellian prospect of a world of permanent war with no particular framework of legality, in which anyone who opposes the neoliberal order can (like the ACC) be classified as potential terrorists and subject to pre-emptory attack.

Perhaps these are desperate measures, the kind one might expect of those seeing their certainties melt away like the stock market in the face of an unprecedented (and overwhelmingly nonviolent) global uprising. The question is what they will be allowed to get away with in suppressing it.

It's all the more appropriate that the IMF actions culminated on Sunday with an anti-war rally. While much of the initiative in the "anti-globalization" movement is centering on places like Argentina and Ecuador, U.S. activists are realizing that their prime historical responsibility is to stop their government from moving from a failed economic model to a global regime based entirely on its ability to wield terror and pure, naked force. ■

What's Up on the Docks?

JUSTIN SULLIVAN / GETTY



The workers needed no court order to go back.

Bush turns to Taft-Hartley to battle the country's most militant union

By David Moberg

inated unions (giving shippers a cheap option for some cargo diverted during the lockout).

The ostensible issue on the West Coast is the company's ability to introduce new technology, including computerization and bar-codes. But it is really about the power of workers to have a voice at their jobs and their fair share of gains in productivity. Since 1960, when the ILWU agreed to accept containerized cargo, the union has accepted new technology as long as it

has jurisdiction over new jobs created, guaranteeing future workers the rights, power and wages that the union provides.

The Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) has tried to move new work out of the union's jurisdiction, but it has lost every one of 30 arbitration disputes about the boundaries of union jobs over the past two decades. Now management is willing to buy off existing workers with the promise of lifetime jobs, but it wants the freedom to define new work as nonunion. "What they're proposing is technological suicide for us," says Richard Mead, president of ILWU Local 10. "There's no future for us in the contract they propose. Suddenly every job is not your job. It belongs to somebody else."

Early last summer top administration officials, including Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge and Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, made it clear that the administration would not tolerate any labor disruption when the contract between the ILWU and the PMA expired at the end of July. They threatened not only to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act, but also to run the ports with Navy personnel, breaking up the coast-wide bargaining unit that has existed since 1934 and restricting the union's right to strike. That stance clearly reinforced PMA's hard line in negotiations.

On September 29, claiming that ILWU was engaged in a slow-down, the PMA locked out 10,500 workers at 29 ports. The union insisted it was simply enforcing contractual safety rules. The safety issue had grown more urgent since seven dockworkers (including five ILWU members) were killed on the West Coast this year.

Meanwhile, the West Coast Waterfront Coalition—a group including corporate giants like Wal-Mart, Toyota, Gap and 3M, as

President Bush's request for a Taft-Hartley injunction to open up the West Coast docks is not simply a brazen use of governmental power on behalf of employers in a collective-bargaining dispute. It is part of an ongoing battle by global shipping and terminal operation companies, backed by the world's biggest retailers and manufacturers, to weaken longshore unions.

Historically, dockworkers have been the most willing of all labor groups to act in international solidarity, and they hold a strategically critical position at the heart of global production networks that are increasingly vulnerable to disruption. "This is a fabricated, well-planned, union-busting program, using the American people to pay the price and having the hammer of the U.S. government deliver the blow," says Ray Familathe of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU).

The government's injunction is not likely to resolve the dispute, which is centered in the union's insistence on having jurisdiction over jobs that are created as technological change takes place. Indeed, if the White House and the maritime companies aggressively push their agenda to weaken the union, the dispute could escalate into an international labor conflict with widespread political and economic consequences.

In recent years, shipping and stevedoring companies have attacked dockworkers in England and Australia, and their attempts to introduce nonunion operations on the East Coast spurred a conflict that led to criminal charges, eventually dismissed, against five leaders of the International Longshoremen's Association in Charleston, South Carolina. In other countries, such as Mexico, privatization of the docks has weakened or elim-

well as many shipping and logistics companies, along with the PMA—demanded that Bush invoke the Taft-Hartley injunction to end the lockout, which the PMA itself had imposed. The ILWU insisted that the PMA end the lockout and repeatedly offered to extend the contract. Shortly before Bush officially called for an injunction, the White House gave business lobbyists—but not the union—a briefing. Officials claimed to be seeking a way of avoiding the politically explosive Taft-Hartley action. The union agreed to the White House request for a 30-day contract extension, which could have given Bush the opportunity to maneuver past the midterm elections and then ask for an injunction, but the PMA refused. Despite their professed opposition, in court PMA lawyers did not challenge the order ending their lockout.

Although the White House was uncomfortable with the timing, the overall strategy had been in place for many months. “There was an employer-orchestrated sense of crisis for Bush to act like PATCO,” says Peter Olney, director of the University of California Institute for Labor and Employment, referring to Reagan’s destruction of the air traffic controllers union in 1981.

The workers needed no order to go back. They’d already been willing. But the Taft-Hartley injunction means that they cannot strike for 80 days, which will take the industry past the busy fall shipping season into the slow months early in the year, when a strike will have less effect. Union members and officials also now can be fined or jailed if the court finds them in violation of the contract or the injunction, which included a stipulation that they work at a “reasonable” pace. Union President James Spinoso insisted that the union would follow the safety code—“in a question of tonnage vs. safety, safety first”—but predicted that management would accuse workers of a slowdown and take the union to court.

Bush’s injunction “will not have an independent positive effect on negotiations,” predicts Michael LeRoy, a labor law professor at the University of Illinois and author of a recent study of Taft-Hartley injunctions (which have been used more than 30 times since 1947). “If parties settle, it’s not because of the injunction. Roughly half of these did not settle during the injunction period. The ‘cooling off’ period becomes a ‘heating up’ period.”

Although court fines and jailing of labor leaders have been rare, this is the first time an injunction was issued to stop an employer lockout, not a strike. “I rate the odds higher that the court will be more involved in enforcement” in this case, LeRoy says, and that increases the odds of a wider conflict.

The law provides that injunctions can be issued only to protect national health and safety, but courts typically have granted injunctions based on economic “inconvenience” that has been greatly overstated, LeRoy found. The oft-repeated estimate that the lockout was costing \$2 billion a day was quite likely exaggerated, says Peter Hall, an expert on port economics at the University of California Institute of Industrial Relations. Yet it is true that a dock stoppage has new weight today, since most corporations maintain extremely low inventories and rely on computerized logistical systems linking sales in a Chicago shopping mall immediately back to production in Chinese factories and then through West Coast ports.

The number of workers on those docks has shrunk because of increased efficiency, and because their historic functions are more dispersed. The 10,500 registered union dockers make an average of \$80,000 a year, reflecting both the dramatically rising productivity on the docks and the union’s ability to make sure they share in those gains. But another 5,000 casual dock workers make much less. In any case, Olney estimates that labor makes up only 5 percent of port costs. There are also about 10,000 very poorly paid truck drivers, defined as self-employed to foil efforts to unionize them, who move cargo containers to warehouses. “If they keep outsourcing all the jobs with every technological change, we’ll be eliminated from the waterfront,” says union spokesman Steve Stallone, “and that’s their plan.”



DAVID MCNEW / GETTY

The longshore lockout is really about the power of workers to have a voice at their jobs.

Shipping companies point to ports like Rotterdam, Hong Kong and Singapore as their technological models, but Kees Marges, the union leader who negotiated the contract for Rotterdam and is now an official of the International Transport Workers Federation, says that “comprehensive jurisdiction has never been an issue there.” As the port changed, the unions continued to represent all workers, except for upper management.

Unions in Australia, Korea and Japan, as well as some European countries, such as Denmark, have already pledged support for the ILWU, and Marges has called a meeting of worldwide dockworker leaders to plan for action. If either Bush or the companies push too hard, especially if the president uses the military to operate ports, it is likely that workers in at least some countries will refuse to unload ships arriving from the United States (as many threatened to do in 1948, stopping Truman from deploying troops).

When it becomes evident that the Taft-Hartley injunction has not broken the resolve of the union, Bush is likely to pursue legislative action to break up the coast-wide bargaining or to restrict dockworkers’ right to strike. In what could become a global PATCO scenario directed at one of the most militant and progressive unions in the United States, the stakes will be high both for the labor movement, here and around the world, and its allies in the movements against corporate globalization. ■

NEW BLOOD

*Can a moment of anti-war anger
become an effective new political movement?*

BY GEOV PARRISH

Way back in August 2002, just a handful of political fringe loonies were questioning the Bush administration's long-developing and clearly inevitable plan to invade Iraq. The pitiful clusters of canaries who usually patrol these coal mines were out there, but their political impact was zero.

The only high-level questions being raised concerning White House war plans were from a collection of conservatives and generals critiquing the politics and logistics of an invasion. Whose bases should we demand to use? Do we bomb first or launch a ground invasion? Would American soldiers be home in time for lunch? This was the visible debate on Iraq only two months ago.

Then came the surprise of late September. Congress is inundated with constituent visits, phone calls, letters, cards, faxes and e-mails, a volume not seen in years. Public sentiment is running strongly against invasion—by several estimates, an average of 90 percent opposed, with well over 99 percent in some districts.

As the bags of mail kept piling higher, the reports from overseas started coming in. In Germany: An unpopular incumbent chancellor wins re-election largely by campaigning against Bush's war, and his minority coalition partner, the Green Party, wins a record number of parliamentary seats. Across the Muslim world, major protest marches are held. In Europe, too. The only government committed to supporting U.S. attack plans, Great



ALEX WONG/GETTY

Not your average protesters.

Britain, witnesses perhaps 400,000 opponents in the streets of London on September 28; other European protests occur in Berlin, Dublin and Madrid. The next weekend, 1.5 million march across Italy—a direct rebuke to conservative ruler Silvio Berlusconi, Bush's only other noticeably sympathetic European leader.

Back in the United States, Bush is dogged by protesters in every city he visits; as many as 3,000 showed up September 27 in Denver, that city's biggest protest in years. By October 6, streets are thick with anti-war gatherings. Big cities: thousands, even tens of thousands, in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Seattle, Boston. And smaller cities: Austin, Hartford, Tulsa, Fresno, Buffalo, Fort Wayne. A hundred people in Sandpoint, Idaho.

Sandpoint, Idaho?

Moreover, some big media outlets actually reported what attendees

already knew: Many of the protesters were new at it, people of all ages and cultures and occupations who've rarely marched for or against anything. Unlike late September's anti-IMF/World Bank protests in Washington, the dominant TV images of Iraq protests haven't been heavily armored robocops and ski-masked miscreants. They've been children, dogs, playful puppets and signs.

And fear. Anger. Outrage. A lot of it, often from people who looked nostalgic for the '90s, not the '60s. In an astonishingly short timespan, something has happened. But what? And can it continue? Grow? Change policy?



Italian anti-war protesters carry a banner reading "No To The War In Iraq" during an October march through Rome.

FRANCO ORIGLIA / GETTY

Already, the anti-invasion impulse—it's not a movement, yet—has changed one important political calculation in Washington. The Bush administration will get its resolution for war out of Congress (at press time, the House had already given its approval). But it will have cost the White House more political chits than Karl Rove ever expected. The Bush team's unexpected need to hustle this time has been a direct result of the unprecedented flood of public opinion, and the ability of an anti-war movement, which attracted dozens to rallies over the summer, to turn out broad community cross-sections five weeks later.

How did that happen? Partly credit latent anger over the Bush agenda, especially the extreme positions and at times insultingly banal justifications staked out by the White House. But protesters also are furious with the utter lack of any meaningful Democratic opposition, the party's failure to muster more than a weak "Me, too" in the face of each fresh Bush administration outrage, going back to the stolen 2000 election.

Notably, grassroots activists on both the left and right also have learned to rely on and refine political mobilizing of the public via the Internet in ways traditional Beltway politicians generally don't yet understand. The wave of anti-war sentiment has been unlike anything Washington has seen in decades: a sudden outpouring of opposition not coordinated or championed by any one group, any prominent politicians or media outlets, or even any well-established advocacy network. It seemed to materialize from thin air.

But the ability to generate such a movement isn't the same as influencing government policy. A representative democracy

can work one of two ways: Either a leader is expected to represent the wishes of her constituents, or she is elected and entrusted to use her best judgment on the issues of the day, on the basis of information not apparent to most of us. By raw numbers, polls show an increasing number of Americans opposing an Iraq invasion, period, and a solid majority opposing invasion without international support. (Excepting Tony Blair, such global support is completely absent—a stunningly rare display of global unanimity.)

So the only conceivably legitimate reason, then, for congressional approval of these resolutions has been because lawmakers know something we don't. With the seriousness of the issue we face, and the enormous chasm between public opinion and Congress, we are at the very least owed an explanation, a hint of what that missing information might be.

No such public explanation has been offered by Bush. A number of lawmakers from allied countries—who've heard the administration's best private pitch for war—say there is nothing else. Tony Blair's September "dossier" on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction reads not as its advertised call to arms, but as a hearty endorsement of the effectiveness of U.N. weapons inspections programs in the mid-'90s. White House rationalizations, in the face of mounting dissent, have relied ever more heavily on name-calling and emotion and increasingly less on fact. (For instance, if the United States has knowledge of such dangerous Iraqi facilities, why are neighboring countries so unconcerned?)

White House emotionalism culminated (so far) in an allegedly comprehensive prime-time national speech in Cincinnati on October 7. There, before a hand-picked audience, Bush answered the question of "Why Now?" with a ludicrous and unsubstantiated claim that Iraq could launch an attack on U.S. soil at any moment. How? The public hasn't been told—not because the information is classified, but because it doesn't exist.

The result has been that across America, lapsed liberals, soccer moms and expense-account dads, military veterans and Americans of all stripes have had their nonsense detectors triggered. Too many of us seem to know what the proponents of invasion seem not to: War is not a game. War is not a first resort, and it should not be fought for short-term political gain or the financial benefit of one's buddies or to distract the public from a horrible economy or to satisfy one's repressed desires to see big things go boom or to avenge Daddy's humiliation.

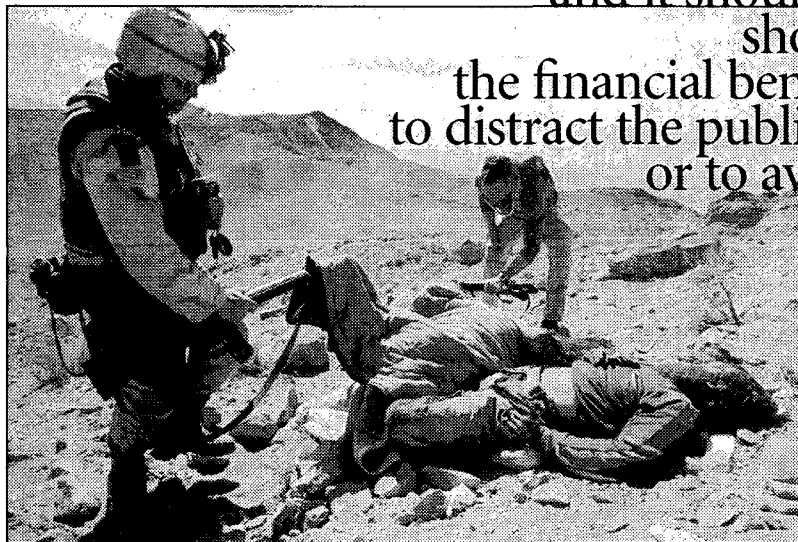
But the challenge of the burgeoning anti-war movement is to make the deep and broad base of anti-Bush anger relevant to Washington—to gain enough influence and leverage to over-

In Our Name and the International Action Center, with roots in the reflexive jargon of the sectarian left. Such groups have a history of alienating potential allies; at this point, the urgency of the task so overwhelms ideological divisions that patriots, pacifists, Trotskyists and people with no particular political leanings at all have been able to work together. That unity and focus will be harder to sustain. And a surge largely born of the Internet must discover how to effectively bring in people not already plugged in; search engines lead the public to the organizers, but they don't lead organizers to the public.

The start of war itself also looms as an enormous challenge; it collapsed the broadest part of the anti-war movement during the Gulf War, in part because the pre-war protest message of "Support the Troops, Not the War" boxed liberals in. Despite a few early rallies, broad opposition never really materialized against the bombing of Afghanistan either. The White House is counting on the patriotic surge that will accompany any combat to erase all doubt, and it also sees the image of Dubya as "the man who rid the world of Saddam Hussein" as its automatic ticket to a second term.

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JOE RAEDLE / GETTY



All those barriers to political effectiveness are new territory for activists accustomed more to using activism as a means of moral witness or emotional venting than drafting legislation. The task is to turn that outrage into a component of a carefully calculated strategy to improve or reverse policy. Anti-war activists have never been known for their ability to craft messages with populist appeal, play insider political games, stick with single messages or issues, keep an apolitical public interested, or to plot several steps (or years) ahead. And opponents of U.S. militarism also don't have an extensive track record of winning.

The good news is that a congressional vote doesn't end the invasion debate. In many ways, it has just started. With time, the ability of this newfound surge to tap into popular anti-Bush discontent may be far greater than we've witnessed. And if Washington does not understand the depth of popular discontent—or a new generation's decentralized organizing tactics and creativity—it is also far less likely to be able to contain it.

Most importantly, and hopefully, there is new blood—in the good sense. Thousands, perhaps millions of people are calling or writing elected officials or holding a placard or candle in public for the first time. Stopping an "inevitable" war, or even sidetracking it significantly, might be the best news imaginable for our anemic democracy. Ours is a generation long-reconciled to the belief that in America, ordinary people cannot make a difference in the decisions affecting our lives. Maybe, just maybe, we still can. ■

come that lack of accountability and, in the future, change policy. It's a formidable task. Successful lobbying requires not only money, but personal relationships, time and trust. A Beltway political culture fueled by tradition, clubbiness and inertia is not about to reverse itself on a critical issue over a movement with no history, no proven staying power, and a core constituency far outside the American political mainstream.

Opponents have already begun to effectively challenge some of those concerns. The kids, dogs and grandmothers at the rallies and on camera have helped. Parallel outrage over a trampled Constitution helps position critics as embracing American ideals, not sneering at them. Protest leaders have, mercifully, stayed on message rather than insisting that opposing an Iraq invasion is inseparable from one or another vision of an ideal world.

The general restraint and clear focus is a surprise and a blessing, particularly at demonstrations originally called by groups, like Not

CARTE BLANCHE

Congress capitulates to Bush's call for war

BY DOUG IRELAND

That both houses of Congress would pass a resolution giving George W. Bush a free hand to take the country to war against Iraq whenever he felt like it—and that this blank check would be supported by quite large majorities—was never in doubt over these past few terrible and depressing weeks.

Why? Because the horrors of the 9/11 attacks produced a tectonic shift in our nation's politics. The slow movement of the country's political center of gravity to the right was given hugely increased momentum by 9/11 and its aftermath. It accelerated the Democrats' drift toward the center—not just on foreign policy—and cowed a majority of the party's incumbents into a fearful reluctance to confront head-on a deeply flawed but highly popular Republican president whose “crusade” against terrorism had already given him the Teflon aura of a “wartime” leader. All year long, the so-called opposition party has failed to oppose. So no one should have been surprised at the lop-sided vote in Congress for an unjustified war in Iraq.

What became unmistakably clear in the days before the vote, however, was the degree to which the Democratic congressional leadership, by falling into the trap so artfully laid for them months ago by Karl Rove and the rest of Bush's political cabal, had connived in undercutting their own party's chances of advancement.

When Dick Gephardt and Joe Lieberman raced to the White House to stand shoulder to shoulder with Dubya in the Rose Garden to announce their co-sponsorship of the administration's war resolution, they did more than simply give Bush “the beautiful picture he wanted” for November (as George Will gleefully crowed on ABC's *This Week*). Their dastardly deal with Bush also guaranteed that Iraq will continue to dominate the news right through Election Day, and thus suck the oxygen out of the bread-and-butter issues (the economy, Social Security, Medicare and the like) on which the Democrats had hoped to take back the House and preserve the Senate. Just as Rove had wanted.



The beautiful picture Bush wanted.

Tom Daschle, too, fell neatly into the White House's pocket when he decided to fast-track the war resolution, instead of waiting until after Election Day. The country was not clamoring for an immediate decision. In fact, all the polls showed growing discomfort with the notion of a war whose purposes—as described by Bush—seemed to change every week. Those same polls also showed that a majority of voters believed Congress, not the president, should play the deciding role in committing the country to war, as indeed the Constitution demands.

The strategic mistake of Daschle and Gephardt in agreeing to Bush's timetable mercilessly truncated the congressional debate; and put a gun to the head of Paul Wellstone, forcing him to go on record with a vote against the war that may wind up costing him his seat (in any case, it will certainly be interpreted

that way if he loses). And a Wellstone defeat could be the loss that costs the Democrats their one-vote Senate majority.

The irony is that the Daschle-Gephardt sellout, which green-lighted the shredding of the Constitution's balance of power, came just as the savvy trackers at the National Committee for an Effective Congress concluded for the first time in months that the Democrats had "a glimmer—with the emphasis on glimmer—of a chance" to pick up 33 of the 55 battleground House races. "If the Iraq vote had been put off until after the election," fumes veteran NCEC boss Russ Hemenway, "it's just now become clear that the Democrats would have won the House. But with less than a month to go after the vote, that's just not enough time" for the Democrats to get traction on domestic issues. And in any case, Iraq will continue to dominate the mass media at least until the U.N. Security Council makes its decision.

Moreover, now that Bush has what Bobby Byrd called "another Gulf of Tonkin resolution" in his pocket, he can play with war like a political yo-yo, throwing out new threats and heating up his

shoddy piecing together of flimsy evidence that contradicts the very briefings we have received" in linking Iraq to 9/11.

In the House, safe-seat Henry Waxman was one of many sell-out liberals who followed Gephardt's lead—even though he said his constituents' mail and phone calls were overwhelmingly anti-war—on the grounds that it would send a message of "unity" to get the United Nations to act. But his fellow Californian, senior liberal George Miller, refuted that argument, saying, "the resolution suggests to the United Nations that they really need not act, because somehow the United States alone will take care of Saddam Hussein."

By a significant majority, House Democrats wound up voting against the war (126 to 81)—a much larger no vote than anyone expected, and a stinging black eye for Gephardt. Grassroots sentiment was so massively against the war in a lot of districts that it turned the votes of many who were wavering and gave them spine. The Democratic leadership in both houses seriously misread the mood of their own party as well as that of the country.

Bush's Cincinnati speech gave an excuse to Democrats who wanted to jump on the war train before it left the station.

rhetoric every time his popularity is menaced by another conflict-of-interest petro-scandal or the sinking economy, and then—most likely of all—saving the actual first strike to reignite jingoistic fervor and jump-start his 2004 re-election.

The Tom-and-Dick-and-Harry capitulation (Harry is Reid of Nevada, the Senate Democratic whip who managed the floor debate and voted for war) was most clearly denounced in the Senate by its president *pro tempore*, crusty West Virginia octogenarian Byrd. The Democrats' one-time Senate leader rose the day after the Rose Garden sellout to proclaim his opposition to:

a unilateral, pre-emptive attack on a sovereign nation that is perceived to be a threat to the United States. This is an unprecedented and unfounded interpretation of the president's authority under the Constitution of the United States—not to mention that it stands the Charter of the United Nations on its head. ... What a shame! Fie upon the Congress! Fie upon some of the so-called leaders of the Congress for falling into this pit ... this rushing to vote on whether to declare war on Iraq without asking why.

Returning again and again to the Senate floor, Byrd, in his historically erudite perorations—many of them ad-libbed—spelled out how the blank check for war risked fundamentally and permanently tipping the Constitutional balance of power to the president's advantage—not just for little Dubya, but for all future presidents. The very character of our democracy has thus been threatened.

Byrd—like Dennis Kucinich in the House—also kept hammering away at the resolution's depraved authorization of aggressive war. Teddy Kennedy finally joined him on that issue in the best of his major Iraq speeches. So too did gutsy Russ Feingold, who scornfully played Bush's prime-time Cincinnati address as "a

Still, the world's only hopes for avoiding a war with the most sinister long-term geopolitical consequences now rest in the hands of two of the world's most notorious crooks: Vladimir Putin, KGB-trained spawn of the Russian kleptocracy, and Jacques Chirac, saved from prosecution only by the presidential immunity he won with re-election last year. Both Putin and Chirac, who have Security Council vetoes, can be bought off by Bush.

The purchase of Putin is well under way. The *Financial Times* reported on October 3 that the partly state-owned company Lukoil, which controls 68 percent of Russia's \$6 billion investment in Iraq's oil fields (the world's second-largest) has "been assured" by Putin that "it will be able to keep its huge stake" in Iraq if Saddam is deposed—a guarantee impossible without a secret deal with Washington. Putin's veto threats at the United Nations are simply raising his price to include the \$7 billion Iraqi debt to Russia, the security of Putin's \$40 billion oil-based trade deal with Iraq, and U.S. passivity when Putin invades nearby Georgia.

And the French are already waffling in public. To take just one example, on October 9, *Le Monde*—reporting a series of declarations by Chirac's top political lieutenants, including his foreign minister—concluded that "the government appears to be preparing [French] public opinion for the use of force" once a deal is made at the United Nations.

Bush's something-for-everybody Cincinnati speech gave an excuse to Democrats who wanted to jump on the war train before it left the station. As John Kerry said in explaining his decision to vote yes to give Bush *carte blanche*: "The administration ... recognizes that war must be our last option to address this threat, not the first."

Kerry, like Gephardt and Daschle and Lieberman, wants to be president, and this self-serving declaration was pure political pandering. But David Gergen (spinmeister to four presidents, both Republican and Democratic) nailed it right when he said on MSNBC that what Bush said in Cincinnati was "blunt, hardline ... a prelude to war." He added ominously: "The logic of the speech would suggest that Iraq is our first stop in the Middle East, not our last." ■

Letter from Lebanon

By Nick Greenslade

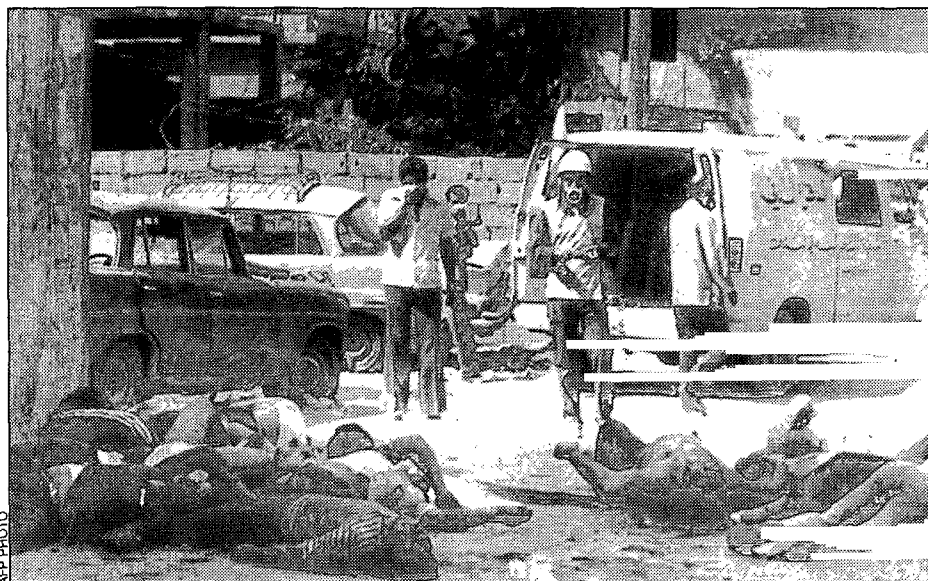
Beirut

Two decades ago, a civil war in Lebanon, which had been simmering for six years, finally came to a boil—with a little help from the outside. Determined to crush Yasser Arafat's PLO once and for all, a certain Ariel Sharon, ably assisted by his allies in the Lebanese Christian Phalange, ordered Israeli forces into the country and parked his tanks in West Beirut until Arafat and his cohorts removed themselves from Israel's sphere of influence.

With characteristic defiance, Arafat threatened to turn Beirut into a "second Stalingrad." Like the defeated forces of Germany some 40 years earlier, he declared, the Israelis would retreat with their tails between their legs. But Arafat was defeated and forced into Siberia-style exile in Tunisia.

He does at least have a homeland of sorts now, if not the one he imagined. Yet it is hard to escape the conclusion that Arafat and Sharon, these two tired, blood-soaked leaders, are confronting each other in another grim face-off that, this time, neither can win.

While the main players in that conflict have moved on to another theater of war, in Beirut one is still confronted by a mosaic of political images of other villains who helped to pour



Some of the victims at Sabra, September 18, 1982.

20 years after the massacres at Sabra and Chatila, what has changed?

oil on these already troubled waters. In the predominantly Shia area of Ouzai, the stern visages of the late Ayatollah Khomeini and Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah bear down on passers-by. At the opposite end of town in East Beirut, roads are named in honor of the Gemayel family, who for 50 years led the Phalange Party, self-proclaimed defenders of the Maronite Christians. It was the assassination of Bashir Gemayel in September 1982 that prompted the Christian militia of Elie Hobeika, aided and watched by Sharon's Israel Defense Forces, to charge into the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Chatila and slaughter between 1,000 and 3,000 civilians. Syrian and Lebanese Shi'ites who run the market alongside Chatila now regularly use the site as a rubbish dump—a sad and grim metaphor.

The legacy of the camp massacres still provokes much impassioned debate at Beirut dinner tables. It is only in the South, however, where Hezbollah operates its observation posts along the Israeli border, that the sound of guns drowns out the clamor of raised voices. It has been two years since the Israelis finally

drew back, though not before they had left another indelible scar on the country. As part of its infamous, last-ditch "Grapes of Wrath" operation in the spring of 1996, the IDF shelled the U.N. camp at Qana, a refuge for hundreds of civilians. Both the United Nations and Amnesty International rejected Israel's claim that this was a tragic error made in the heat of battle.

Nevertheless, Israeli jets still fly over Lebanese airspace, in contravention of U.N. decrees. In response, Hezbollah fires its anti-aircraft artillery into the sky above Jewish settlements on the other side of the border. As Nick Blandford, journalist for the English-language *Daily Star* newspaper, told me, there are occasionally some richly comical scenes, too: "Not long ago, there was an incident in which the Israeli troops retaliated to a volley of paint-ball attacks from Hezbollah by throwing back eggs."

More seriously, Israeli security agents are widely believed to be behind the May assassination of the son of Ahmed Jibril, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Shortly after a guerrilla sortie had slipped across the border and killed several Israelis in an ambush, a Lebanese Jewish spy got word to Hezbollah to expect a military response. The execution of Jibril fils was thus interpreted as a signal from Israel that it could strike at the heart of the resistance movement if pushed too far.

Hezbollah is proud of its role in driving Israel out of the country. But what is the next stage in the war against the "Zionist enemy"? What would Hezbollah do if all its wishes against Israel came true? I asked these questions of Sheikh Hassam Ezz-El-Dine, but drew a blank. After a lengthy peroration about his organization's success in expelling the Israelis without offering concessions, as the Egyptians and Jordanians had been forced to do, he broke into a general call for Arab unity in the face of intimidation from the United States and the European Union. It is tempting to believe that if Israel didn't exist, Hezbollah would need to invent it.

By the same token, Israel needs Hezbollah. It recognizes that any linkage between Islamic extremism and armed aggression in the Middle East can only serve to cement American support for its pol-



Protesters in Beirut, 20 years later. The anniversary of the massacre passed with hardly any notice in the U.S. media.

icy of repression in the Occupied Territories. In the days before I arrived, taking their lead from comments delivered by those disinterested observers Donald Rumsfeld and Shimon Peres, reports had popped up in the American press suggesting that al-Qaeda operatives had made their way to Lebanon to team up with Hezbollah.

If anyone is in a position to assess the veracity of these reports, that person is Robert Fisk. Arguably the most famous reporter on the region, his book *Pity the Nation* remains the defining history of the Lebanese conflict. He is also one of the few journalists to have met Osama bin Laden. He was also instantly dismissive of the latest "news" about al-Qaeda being active in the country: "It's all bullshit, part of the furniture of lies that the Israelis and Americans construct to justify whatever action they are contemplating."

He would rather talk about Israeli terrorism in Lebanon. Just over a year ago, a BBC documentary team reignited the issue of Ariel Sharon's complicity in the Sabra and Chatila massacres. Phalange militia leader Hobeika, it emerged, was prepared to give evidence that would lay ultimate responsibility for the war crimes at Sharon's doorstep. Shortly after meeting with lawyers who were preparing the case against the Likud leader, Hobeika was blown up outside his house in Beirut.

Hobeika was an extremely unpleasant individual—after assisting the Israelis in their dirty work, he transferred his allegiance to Syria. He may have exceeded his utility to the latter, but Fisk doubts the culpability of Damascus. "I sat close to General Kenaan, the head of Syrian intelligence, at the funeral, and he was visibly shocked. There's no way that he's that good an actor."

Fisk reached the scene of the crime within 10 minutes of the explosion and is convinced that it bore all the hallmarks of the professional hit-job in which the Mossad has become expert in the past 30 years. To support his suspicions, he highlights the coincidence that on the day before the bombing, the Israeli attorney general issued a statement that, from now on, the defense of the prime minister would be a matter of state. At the time, Sharon said that the accusations of Israeli involvement were "not worthy of a comment." But, as Fisk points out, if an informer was taken out the day before he was due to give evidence against the Mafia, you might be justified in having your suspicions.

Walid Jumblatt is the great survivor of Lebanese politics, having led the Druze community and its political representation, the Progressive Socialist Party, for nearly a quarter of a century. His father and grandfather were both assassinated, and he narrowly escaped the same fate. He sat in governments of

national unity alongside Gemayel and Hobeika before they met their bloody ends. Clearly, one does not survive this long in Lebanon without being able to discern which way the wind is blowing, and Jumblatt has often been criticized for the inconsistency of his positions. (Fisk calls him "a nihilist.")

In 2000, he had called for Syrian influence in Lebanese affairs to be "rebalanced." When I met him, however, he was lambasting the recent World Maronite Congress for reiterating this very demand. Yet he remains an indispensable source of opinion on the region, and he's a permanent rent-a-quote, having once famously summed up the sorry predicament of Lebanon as "between Hanoi and Hong Kong."

I point out that in March, no more than 10 minutes' drive from where we are sitting, the various leaders of the Arab League congregated to discuss another peace settlement, put forward this time by Saudi Arabia. Intending no doubt to deflect some of the flak coming their way after 9/11, the Saudis rehashed a vague plan about mutual recognition. Jumblatt could scarcely conceal his contempt: "Oh, you mean [New York Times columnist] Thomas Friedman's plan. That had been gathering dust in a Riyadh basement for 20 years before the Saudis thought it might be in their interests to reproduce it. Nothing has happened."

Most deflating about this meeting—other than Sharon's response, the invasion of Jenin, which was as depressing as it was predictable—was the fact that no thought appeared to have been given to the fate of the nearly 400,000 Palestinians who remain here in the wretched refugee camps. Compared with the "bantustans" of Gaza and the West Bank, a full-time employment level of 40 percent makes these enclaves seem like a model of economic success. But nobody is deceived. Palestinians are banned from certain categories of employment and from owning property in the country; they are denied access to Lebanese schools and hospitals. Lebanon justifies this on the grounds that its resources are already overstretched, and rightly argues that the refugees are a matter for the international community.

Only a small group of NGOs, however, has offered genuine support to the U.N. relief missions in the camps. Dr. Bassem Sirhan works with one such welfare association. Forced out of Palestine with his family in the 1948 war, he is equally scornful of Oslo—"the dirtiest deal ever handed to the Palestinians." Since the PLO pulled out in the '80s, he has watched the situation slowly deteriorate. Arafatites, Hamas and Syrian-based alliances jostle among themselves for leadership. The only unifying factor, he says, is a burning desire among the youth "to go to Palestine to fight the Israelis. In Lebanon they are isolated socially, deprived economically. People don't want them."

As he lays out this grim state of affairs, I am reminded of a phrase that was once said of the Jewish people: that without a nation, they would continue to be the bastards of humanity. With every day that Israeli tanks remain in the Occupied Territories and the talk from Washington centers on eliminating Arafat and the suicide bombers, the legitimate claim of the Palestinians in Lebanon slips further and further off the agenda. You can bet that it is a point not lost on Ariel Sharon. ■

Nick Greenslade also writes for *New Statesman* and *The Nation*.

Not a Drop to Drink

By Kristie Reilly

The statistics are startling, even a bit panic-inducing. Around the world today, more than 1 billion people have no access to clean drinking water; another 2 billion live in conditions of water scarcity. Water consumption doubles

Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit

By Vandana Shiva
South End Press
156 pages, \$14

Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop the Corporate Theft of the World's Water

By Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke
The New Press
265 pages, \$25.95

every 20 years, at twice the rate of population growth: Since 1970, available fresh water per capita worldwide has dropped 33 percent. By 2025, the world will hold an additional 2.6 billion people—a 57 percent increase over today's 6.1 billion. By the same year, the United Nations predicts that as many as two-thirds of the world's population will be living in conditions of severe water shortage, and another third in conditions of absolute water scarcity.

Water—to put it mildly—is not an endless resource. Available fresh water makes up less than one-half of 1 percent of all water on the planet. To meet the needs of the estimated 8.7 billion people inhabiting the globe 23 years from now, water use will double. Yet pollution of water sources is projected to quadruple in the same time period, and 10 percent of the world's crops are already irrigated from sources that cannot be renewed. How will we feed these new arrivals? How will we feed ourselves?

Water Wars, by environmental thinker and activist Vandana Shiva, explores the legal and theoretical issues surrounding the rapid diminishing of this most precious resource. Awarded the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize in 1993, Shiva is one of the most far-reaching and hopeful thinkers on the left today. *Blue Gold*, by Maude Barlow and Tony

Clarke—probably North America's foremost water experts—is a nearly encyclopedic companion, cataloging challenges to water worldwide.

The two books provide a chilling, in-depth examination of a rapidly emerging global crisis. "Quite simply," Barlow and Clarke write, "unless we dramatically change our ways, between one-half and two-thirds of humanity will be living with severe fresh water shortages within the next quarter-century. ... The hard news is this: Humanity is depleting, diverting and polluting the planet's fresh water resources so quickly and relentlessly that every species on earth—including our own—is in mortal danger."

The crisis is so great, the three authors agree, that the world's next great wars will be over water. The Middle East, parts of Africa, China, Russia, parts of the United

the planet decreases, today's low-level conflicts can only increase in intensity.

Demand for water is so great near cities that many, like Los Angeles and Beijing, have begun or are considering huge water transport projects just to maintain current levels of usage. At current rates of growth, cities in the American Southwest—Albuquerque, Phoenix and Tucson—are projected to go dry in 10 to 20 years. Experts give Mexico City another 10 years.

Much of the world's available fresh water is stored in naturally forming aquifers underground, and as a result of demand these aquifers are being heavily mined. Surface water has been depleted and polluted so drastically that many countries of the world have no choice but to rely on them: In the Middle East, the world's most water-scarce region, countries from Saudi Arabia to Libya rely on aquifers to supply half or all of their water. In Israel, aquifers are so empty that sea water has begun to flow into them, in a process called salination. Once sea water enters an aquifer, the basin becomes salty, and the water is permanently lost to use.

Urbanization—the paving over and deforestation of the earth—is causing a permanent loss of water as well. Instead of being absorbed into the earth through water catchments like wetlands and forests, to return to aquifers and the water cycle, water flows across pavement out to the sea, where it is lost: Because the earth can no longer hold ground or surface water, drinking water disappears, too. The earth is being paved so quickly, Barlow says, that it may be just 100 years before we've lost all the water we have left.

Population growth and its concomitant demands on water aren't the only problems, however. Our existing water supply is being devastated by human activity, from dams to massive river diversion projects to pollution and deforestation. We are rapidly destroying what little water we had to begin with.

Sixty percent of the world's rivers have been harnessed by a stunning 840,000 dams, at great environmental and social



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STANISLAVA DIMITROVA

States and several other areas are already struggling to equitably share water resources. Many conflicts over water are not even recognized as such: Shiva blames the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in part on the severe scarcity of water in settlement areas. As available fresh water on

cost; Shiva estimates 16 to 38 million tribal peoples have been displaced by dams in this century in India alone. There are now so many dams that geophysicists believe their combined influence has altered the speed of the earth's rotation and the shape of its gravitational field. These dams, Barlow and Clarke say, are the major reason many of the world's rivers are so depleted they no longer reach the sea.

At the same time, rampant pollution is devastating the earth's rivers and lakes. Eighty percent of China's rivers are so polluted they can no longer support fish. Seventy-five percent of Russia's water is no longer safe to drink. Pollution, deforestation, urbanization, aquifer mining: Combine all of these elements, say Barlow and Clarke, and "there is simply no way to overstate the fresh water crisis on the planet today."

For all that, the authors make clear that an environmental crisis in water is not the only thing to worry about. As water is overused and aquifers empty worldwide, major corporations are eagerly eyeing what water has become: a booming, virtually untapped market worth \$1 trillion per year. If the world has a water problem, privatization proponents say, let us solve it. Through global trade agreements at the

WTO, they are likely to get the chance. The grasp of the free market is extending to our most precious resource—the basis of all life.

Water has been defined as a good, Barlow and Clarke note—not a right—for years in the General Agreement on Trade

The grasp of the free market has extended to our most precious resource and the basis of all life on earth.

and Tariffs (GATT). But the IMF's structural adjustment programs and the World Bank's very similar policies throughout the past two decades have created a climate in which privatization, and the global corporations eager and ready to take advantage of it, could grow. Since the '80s, the IMF has made loans to developing countries contingent upon their governments' willingness to drastically restructure their economies—privatize state services, slash public spending on health, education and social services, and reorient production almost entirely toward exports. All this, of course, to service debts owed to foreign creditors.

In the past several years, these IMF policies have forced—and this is hardly a complete list—Tanzania, Niger and Rwanda to privatize their water systems. The World Bank has been behind privatization in Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Malaysia and Nigeria. Attempts to privatize water in Ghana are underway. "In the '70s and '80s," Shiva explains, "the World Bank and other aid agencies focused on disastrous technologies as a means of water provision. Since the '90s, these agencies have been aggressively pushing privatization and market-based distribution of water, which already promises to be equally catastrophic."

Conditions for the IMF's structural adjustment programs make them seem somewhat more like internationally enforced looting sprees. The IMF and World Bank often insist on "full cost recovery" in water privatization, Barlow and Clarke report, which means governments are not allowed to subsidize any part of the cost of services. On the other hand, companies are allowed to charge customers for infrastructure improvements that may not be made for years. Both factors send water bills through the roof; those who cannot



A Moment of Deep Hope

Geov Parrish interviews Vandana Shiva

Indian physicist Vandana Shiva is one of the world's most renowned and respected grassroots leaders. She has effectively organized and advocated for farmers and other workers in India and other poor countries to retain the rights to their seeds, water and traditional livelihoods. Her 13 books have covered everything from feminism and environmental justice to biopiracy and globalization. Shiva spoke with *In These Times* during a recent visit to Seattle.

Three years ago, you were one of the most articulate and inspiring of the critical voices in Seattle during the WTO ministerials.

The tremendous response that people had at the time of the WTO meetings in Seattle came of the first awareness: "Oh my God, there are these huge corpora-

tions starting to rule over us, these are the agendas they have."

Not just in this country. All over the world.

It's a world phenomenon. This country often ends up being the leader in bad trends in corporatization, bad trends in militarization. It would be wonderful to have it lead in the trends of peace, equity, sharing, justice. The joint assault on peoples' freedoms and rights from what I call the fundamentalism of the market and fascism—fascism in governments right now—is forcing all of us to invent democracy anew.

How do we invent it?

We invent it by turning to our advantage the smallness of the spaces left to act. When there is formal democracy, when

there is peace, when there is welfare, a good economy, by and large people can leave it to other structures. They say, "Well, OK, it's all right, you're looking after education, you're looking after our food, you can have the power."

Now it has become very clear that the system as it is will not allow food to reach the majority of human beings on the planet, that it is going to take water away—and the result of that will be total denial of the right to live.

There's also an argument for reinventing our relationship to technology. How does that process become more democratic?

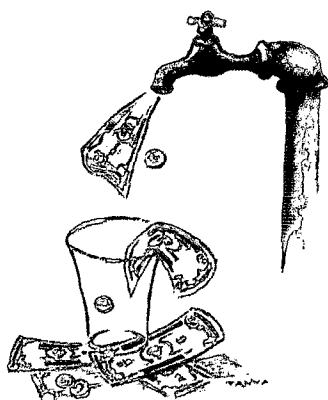
By making it a living democracy. Living democracy is a constellation of democracies of different dimensions. One of the dimensions is the economy.

pay are cut off and left without access to water at all. Privatization contracts between major companies and governments, called public-private partnerships, are negotiated partly through the World Bank and IMF and may also deliver guaranteed profits to the company. In Chile, one company is currently guaranteed an annual 33 percent profit through its World Bank-backed contract.

Privatization is the future, if the World Trade Organization has its way. Three trade agreements—NAFTA, GATT and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)—define water as a tradable good, service or investment, and these international trade agreements are the most alarming, least-publicized aspect of the wars brewing over water today. When water is defined as a good or service, all global trade rules apply. These trade agreements are hostile to most government regulation as “non-tariff” barriers to trade, and as such they effectively discourage governments from shaping their own domestic water policies. NAFTA prohibits its three members, Mexico, Canada and the United States, from banning the bulk export of any resource, including water. GATS is actually designed to promote trade liberalization for water and other services. The proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas, now being

negotiated, promises to be even worse.

Under the WTO, member countries can bring suit on behalf of corporations who say they’ve been discriminated against in regulatory measures; NAFTA allows corporations to sue countries directly. In a 1998 case that is still under consideration, a California company sued the Canadian



government because British Columbia had banned the export of bulk water just after the company signed a contract to export water from Canada to California. The company, Sun Belt Water, is suing for \$10 billion in lost profits.

Perhaps most disconcerting of all is GATS. This agreement went into effect at the end of the Uruguay round of GATT

negotiations in 1994, and is intended to inaugurate a new era in international trade. What are services? Virtually anything that cannot be considered a good. “Many services are highly regulated to protect both consumers and the domestic economy,” a publication from the European Union pitched toward business explains, “and some are public monopolies.”

There are 160 service sectors defined in the GATS agreement; they span finance, law, education, health care, energy provision, even social services. And, of course, water. GATS negotiations between WTO members are scheduled to occur over the next few years and to conclude in 2005. The agreement’s architects hope the next several years will involve progressively greater liberalization in services around the world.

But perhaps not if the public finds out. In April of this year, the European Union’s liberalization requests to 29 developed and middle-income countries—prepared for the first deadline of GATS negotiations—were leaked to the press. The European Union had asked each of them to open up markets in water across the board. It also requested the lifting of restrictions on foreign ownership in countries from Malaysia to Mexico, and the opening up of markets in electricity, finance, banking and telecommunications.

You can’t have living economies unless you have localized economies. ... Knowledge and innovation are another dimension of the living democracy. We’ve had, beginning with the Cartesian revolution, this idea that technology was something that some people created and gave a life of its own. Democracy also was made to appear like that: having a life of its own in an administration that depends on the people who put it into power, but forgets between elections that they have delegated rights and delegated authority. ... In a living democracy, people have control over the decisions on what technologies are created. ...

The only reason biotechnology is still around in food and agriculture is because Monsanto’s cooking up the figures on what it delivers. That happens because technology is beyond the reach of people, even when the technology’s going to hurt people. ... For example, a monopoly on seed is a monopoly on seed. Now, you can

call it intellectual property rights, and through that, derive beautiful language on the right to have a return on investment to keep innovation going in society. All that paraphernalia has been used for 10 years to justify monopolies on life and ownership of life and the false claim that corporations create life, create seed, invent plants.

There also seem to be real structural ways in which the institutions of globalization have been encouraging militarization and war.

Globalization and militarism are two sides of the same coin. ... When states expropriate resources from people, when they deny people basic needs, jobs are destroyed, livelihoods are destroyed—the democratic response of any community is the right to protest, to say, “We want a change.”

Globalization has basically—through taking away the rights of people and defining the ownership and control over

food and water as corporate rights, which states then have to defend—has equipped states to unleash terrorism on their own people.

And “people defending their rights” becomes the working definition of “terrorists.”

It’s not a surprise that after 9/11 every state could instantaneously pull out anti-terror laws, even through we know how long it takes for genuine lawmaking to create a new law—especially laws that step on peoples’ toes. So you really have the state criminalizing its own population.

We’re also trained to view violence as a way to resolve conflict.

That is the real disease. ... It’s fed by all the mythology we’ve created around technology. When we’re saying that violence will solve it, we’re also saying that the latest technology will solve it. The biggest bomb will solve it.

The disclosure caused a firestorm. Advocacy groups accused the European Union of trying to privatize the Third World on behalf of corporations. (Europe is home to the largest water companies in the world, Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux; Vivendi Environnement, a division of the media conglomerate Vivendi Universal; and Thames Water, a subsidiary of the huge German utility RWE). The European Union denied the charges in a barrage of statements. GATS poses no threat to water systems, officials said: Governments can simply refuse to accept our requests.

It remains to be seen how the world's governments will respond next March, when they must indicate which markets they are willing to open to international trade. The United States submitted its requests this summer; those too, according to a statement from U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, make numerous requests of other countries in "environmental services," finance, telecommunications and other sectors. Global trade in services—and the potential opening up of water markets worldwide—has officially begun.

In the United States, privatization has already gained a significant foothold, with some 15 percent of the market. That fig-

ure probably includes older, existing contracts—Boston, for example, has arranged water shipments with private companies since 1796—but much of it is undeniably new as well. The global water giants—Suez, Vivendi and Thames Water—dominate here, too: Together, the three companies own the four largest private water companies in the country, and they are behind every major privatization project of the last few years. Atlanta, Milwaukee and Indianapolis have privatized their municipal water systems; New Orleans will decide whether to privatize its own, as well as its sanitation system, in October, and numerous towns and communities have privatized as well.

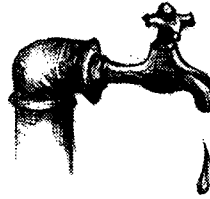
Of course, along with privatization comes the ineptitude and sheer disregard for health and safety associated with such projects. This summer, Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin sent a formal letter of warning to Suez, which runs the city's water system. Water in many parts of the city ran the color of iced tea for weeks, and four times over the course of the summer Atlanta residents were told to boil their water before drinking.

"We cannot survive as a species if greed is privileged and protected and the economics of the greedy set the rules for how we live and die," Shiva writes. Residents of water-privatized cities all over the world agree—privatization seems to strike a visceral nerve, especially where it is accompanied by unreliable or unsafe service and high rates. The communities it strikes are fighting back. Cochabamba, Bolivia, is perhaps the best-known of such protests: In 2000, tens of thousands of residents

protested and then rioted after the U.S.-based Bechtel took over the water system, raising rates as much as 300 percent. The protests eventually forced Bolivia to cancel the contract, and company executives fled the city.

The Alliance of Small Island States is a group of island nations whose very existence is threatened by the rising tides and violent storms associated with global warming. An ambassador from the group says, "The strongest human instinct is not greed. ... It is survival."

Welcome to the 21st century. Let's hope Shiva, Barlow and Clarke are wrong. ■



You mention in one of your essays going down to the upper Rio Grande and Tierra Amarilla in northern New Mexico, where indigenous Chicano farmers have struggled to retain their land and water. How do some of the struggles and issues there compare with issues you've encountered in India?

The differences are becoming fewer. Twenty years ago, your struggles in this country were primarily about the next safety measure in a car. Our struggles then were food and water. As time has passed, globalization has created more and more insecurity worldwide and has started to take over those vital sectors that were people sectors, not corporate sectors. Thirty years ago, food was not controlled by corporations, water was not controlled by corporations.

Going back and looking at much of the literature 30 years ago, there was this expectation, genuine or not, that the "underdeveloped" would catch up eventually. That expectation is gone.

Precisely because "developing" was defined as reaching the levels of contaminated production and super-consumerism of the West. ... The failure of the development project in economic and ecological terms ... is in a way giving us the opportunity to basically say that "a better life" has to be defined some other way. Not in consumerism, not in fictitious wealth creation, but in sustainable wealth creation, sharing of our wealth. ... The problem was, when we said "a better life," what we meant was "a more expensive fridge."

Many of the types of changes you're talking about are essentially revolutionary changes, not in the sense of armed struggle, but in the sense of going to the root of how our economic and cultural and political systems work and redefining who controls and who makes the decisions. How can we get from here to there?

I think we are in a moment of deep hope, because the corporations have done a better job of destroying themselves than humans ever could. ... People

are self-organizing. There is no mastermind in one place saying, "This is how you organize." When water is taken away, every community knows what to do about it. No one has to be told, and they don't have to have *Das Kapital* on their desks, nor do they have to have political science theorists advising them. Water goes, you know what to do. Basic life survival goes, you know what to do.

One of the things that has given me a lot of hope recently is the inability of governments in Bolivia, Argentina and Venezuela to withstand popular outrage. Americans' reactions are very far behind where people in the rest of the world already are.

I think the leaders are very far behind. They are still in a Cold War mentality, and the Cold War is over. They are still in technocratic rule, and people don't trust technology. They still want to have us believe in their accountants, and they themselves recognize that their accountants don't work. And they are exercising power that they already have lost. ■

Still a Good Catholic Boy

By Eugene McCarraher

It's a trite but often true enough maxim that "you never stop being Catholic." On those baptized before the "updating" (*aggiornamento*) of Roman Catholicism in the '60s, the mark of what Lenny Bruce once called "the only the Church" is especially indelible, even if they've liberalized or "lapsed." The precise character and

The Gatekeeper

By Terry Eagleton

St. Martin's Press

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impact of that mark are not, however, always easy to discern. It's still a commonplace, at least among intellectuals, that the culture of Catholic devotion, from rosary beads to May processions, does little more than burden the faithful with guilt and deference to authority. In politics (so the wisdom goes), the only the Church has blessed the A-list of reaction, from Maurras, Mussolini and Franco, to Marcos, Batista and Duvalier. Mother Teresa's solicitude of dying children and fawning despots would seem, in this view, to set the bounds of the Catholic political imagination.

But a little more history demonstrates that this isn't the entire story. A short but

illustrious roster of faithful, lapsed and almost Catholics have stood firmly on the radical left. Dorothy Day and Simone Weil; Tom Hayden, Thomas Merton, Daniel Berrigan and Ernesto Cardenal; American "labor priests," French "worker priests," Latin American "base communities"—all have belied the caricature of Catholicism as reaction bouqueted with incense. And they did so before *aggiornamento*, whose rhetoric of "openness" is now deployed, like so many other '60s shibboleths, by Catholic champions of corporate globalization.

Terry Eagleton would understand. With a distinguished career as a literary scholar, essayist, novelist, playwright and screenwriter, Eagleton is arguably the most prolific and versatile Marxist intellectual in the English-speaking world. (Though equally productive, Frederic Jameson lacks Eagleton's range.) But as his comic and pugnacious memoir reveals, he was (and remains) an amateur theologian, a lapsed but recidivist Catholic, a prodigal son still in love with the gospel: "The path from the Tridentine creed to Trotskyism is shorter than it seems." And as Eagleton shows, it's a two-way street as well.

The boy who became what Prince Charles called "that dreadful Terry Eagleton" grew up after World War II in Salford, a working-class town in the Lancashire country of England. (Salford was so poor and dingy that a sociologist who researched there titled his study *The Classic Slum*.) Born into a home "as bare as a gerbil's," and plagued by an asthma that almost killed him, young Terence knew the primacy of material life long before he studied Marx. As a grandson of Irish immigrants, he also inherited a Catholic religion and a colonial sensibility that fostered an unwavering but not callous realism. Asthma, poverty, broken lives—the nuns for whom he was a gatekeeper at the nearby Carmelite convent were right to believe that "the flaw of the

world ran so deep that it cried out for some thoroughgoing transformation." So while the sweet smell of incense could choke off political militance, it also let "no anodyne whiff" of liberal reform to obscure the tenacity of injustice. Perhaps that's why, still a good Catholic boy, he joined the Young Socialists at the age of 16.

As a colonial, Eagleton acquired the ironic and irreversible privilege of master-

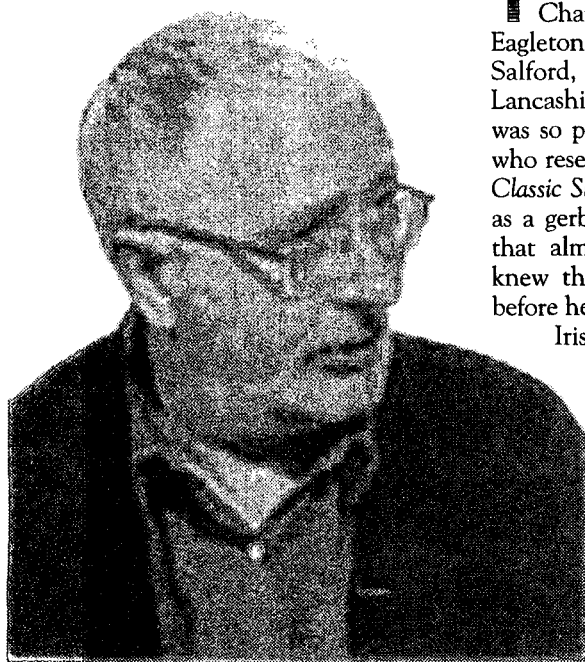
A short but illustrious roster of faithful, lapsed and almost Catholics have stood firmly on the radical left.

ing the oppressor's language. His Irish kin were already adept at the music and storytelling through which they could triumph in, if not over, their hardship. "Language was our edge over a lackluster world."

Meanwhile, his asthma kept him off the playing field and in the company of books. (The set of Dickens his mother purchased still sits on Eagleton's bookshelf.) So while his schoolmates' lives remained as "limited and repetitive as a fruitbat's," Eagleton went to Cambridge as "the Scholarship Boy" who—like Albert Finney and Mike Leigh—found a one-way ticket out of Salford. "They were lifers; I was passing through en route to higher things."

Eagleton recounts this voyage without a trace of upwardly mobile nostalgia. Reflecting on his father's death the night before his Cambridge interview, he writes that the university's elitist culture was both "the Law which had brought my father to his ruin" and "the Law which my father was asking me to love."

At Cambridge in the early '60s, Eagleton discovered that the Law was hard to love. Cambridge (like Oxford, where, until his recent move to Manchester, Eagleton taught English literature) bred a swarm of "brutally self-interested fogeys" who knew "precisely which desk at the Treasury they intend to occupy." His professors were a dis-



Terry Eagleton

mal lot of pedants, each with “an outsized cranium and a shriveled heart.” Never starstruck by Oxbridge, Eagleton swipes at the more annoying conventions of academic culture, especially the false modesty of scholars who claim, before pontificating, that they really know very little about a subject. (“Tha’art paid to know!” as one impatient listener once shouted.)

As bleak as Cambridge must have been, it’s hard to believe that Eagleton’s education was “a waste of time,” as he puts it. He encountered the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose *Philosophical Investigations* traced the meaning of language to its daily, public uses. He met Raymond Williams, another working-class scholarship boy who had crossed into enemy territory. With his longish hair and rollneck sweaters, Williams cut a youthfully paternal figure for the bright and restless students attracted to the British New Left. Though Eagleton devotes disappointingly few pages to their friendship and collaboration, anyone familiar with his work knows that Williams’ materialist perspective on culture as a “whole way of life” had a seminal and enduring impact on Eagleton.

He also met Laurence Bright, an aristocrat, a leftist and a Dominican friar. Bright’s patrician radicalism, while not uncommon on the left, was unusual in its fusion of Catholic theology and socialist theory—the perfect combination for a devout but militant undergraduate eager to join religion and politics, eschatology and revolution. Under the spell of Bright

and Williams, Eagleton and other lefty Catholics at Cambridge (Stuart Hall being another) formed a movement and journal called *Slant*. Assembled in the heady days of *aggiornamento*, *Slant* partook of the “updating” fashion but remained far to the political left of most Catholic

The culture of Cambridge was both “the Law which had brought my father to ruin” and “the Law which my father was asking me to love.”

reformers, even to the point of maintaining an uneasy relationship with the British Communist Party.

Because Eagleton doesn’t linger on his *Slant* days—they could, he suggests, be the subject of “the odd doctoral thesis”—he conceals the fact that the movement, and especially Eagleton, produced some of the most vigorous and imaginative religious thought of the Cold War era. There was already a long and motley lineage of attempts to wed Christianity and socialism, so *Slant*’s conception was original but not immaculate. With greater erudition and literary talent than many of his predecessors, Eagleton put Marxist philosophy

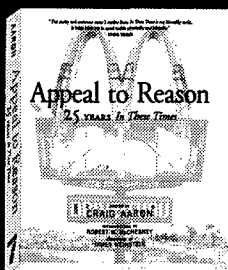
and Catholic theology into friendly but critical conversation.

In *The Body as Language* (1970)—a book that explored the symbolism of the body long before it was fashionable in academia—Eagleton anointed the church, the body of Christ, “a revolutionary vanguard ... working to dissipate the layers of false consciousness.” In the sacrament of the Eucharist, he wrote, Catholics had a “symbolic transcendence of historical alienation,” an anticipation of a kingdom in which goods, and even bodies, would be communally shared and enjoyed. His contention that marriage provides a foretaste of communism remains a brilliant and unromantic artifact of theoretical intelligence, and his discussion of “priesthood and Leninism” is a compelling meditation on freedom and authority in revolutionary politics. So Bright was not being merely frivolous when he replied to Eagleton’s question about how far left a Catholic could go, “Oh, as far left as you like.”

While Eagleton would certainly repudiate most if not all of these views today (for reasons he never clarifies, he appears to have left the church in the mid-’70s), his conception of Catholicism as a disciplined and doctrinally coherent revolutionary community augured much about his subsequent career. Indeed, Eagleton still draws upon his Catholic past for guidance in his Marxist present. In the midst of the “war on terrorism,” these traits possess more than biographical

interest, as indictments of “religion” for feeble-mindedness and fanaticism are fast becoming staples in the polemical arsenal of liberal punditry. Eagleton’s frequent and unashamed appropriation of Christian insight is a refreshing contrast to, say, Christopher Hitchens, whose boilerplate tirades suggest laziness about the subject of religion.

Eagleton notes numerous similarities between Catholicism and the left, not all of them happy. He laments the pointless and interminable meetings, the discursive obfuscation, the narcissism of small sectarian differences. He notes the tiresome, dangerous fanat-



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ics, along with the heresies and denunciations. He also faults the mutual aversion to liberalism that threatens believers and partisans with intellectual bankruptcy. For all its shortcomings, liberalism, Eagleton reminds us, acknowledges the ambiguity of reality, the difficulty of knowledge, and "the charm of nuance and singularity."

Still, Eagleton stresses those liberal shortcomings to the credit of Catholics and socialists. Wary of the facile celebration of "diversity," he contends that much of it is phony, and that a certain uniformity of thought is indispensable to common deliberation and action. Draped in the garments of tolerance, civility and open-mindedness, liberals, he asserts, hide an indifference to truth and an antipathy toward politics that betray their favorable position in the world. When his Cambridge tutor touted the virtues of principled uncertainty, Eagleton saw "the Spanish maid and butler lurking dimly behind his discourse." This cavalier vacillation underlies liberal reluctance to venture beyond reformism, and sanctions the inability—replicated, he believes, in the bogus, market-driven pluralism of post-modernism—to imagine the future as anything but "the present plus more options." (Workers, unite, you have nothing to lose but your cable stations.)

By contrast, neither the Carmelite nun nor the serious radical can "overcome her astonishment that there are people in the world who believe ... that this is it." But this astonishment testifies, not to their optimism, but to their unsentimental conviction that the world is a hell and could yet be a heaven. Their faiths persist for a number of reasons. Catholicism and socialism are traditions of "rigorous thought and sensuous symbolism" that demand intellectual seriousness, communal solidarity and aesthetic resonance. (Much of Eagleton's acerbic dismissal of postmodernism, here and in his most recent work, derives from his belief that it is theoretically and symbolically frivolous.)

Both traditions eschew subjectivism, placing theory and practice over "the fetish of interiority." And both remind us of "our humble roots as labouring, socializing, materially limited creatures" whose glorious finitude harbors genius, beauty and love. In Marxist terms, alienation is possible only with a species-being; in Christian terms, the ability to violate the will of God is ironic evidence of our likeness to divinity.

That's why, when Eagleton asserts that socialism has been "defeated but not invalidated" and that its very powerlessness makes it "more relevant than ever," I can't help but wonder if the faith of the gatekeeper isn't very far from the surface. (As Walter Benjamin, the subject of one of Eagleton's finest books, once put it, Marxism must enlist the services of theology, which is "wizened, and must be kept out of sight.") For how could weakness possibly be relevant, unless, as in comedy—or in theology—its triumph is already ordained? In Marxist thought, as Bertolt Brecht asserted, those who fight for a kinder world must not themselves be kind, for the scarcity and struggle that precede the revolution have not yet been—and may not be—overcome. In Christian theology, creation is already abundant, our sin is the source of privation and the reign of charity has already begun—so those who fight for a kinder world must themselves be kind.

In one of his smartest and wisest passages—a comparison of "the good" and "the fine"—Eagleton marks this contrast in a way that suggests the persistence of the gatekeeper. The good are righteous, he explains, and they must win in the struggle against injustice, "but only then." That's when the fine must command the scene with a splendid "grandeur of spirit" defined by forgiveness and generosity. With a mercy made possible by their confidence in bounty, they break "the futile circle of tit-for-tat" and make a world "in which all odds will be struck even." Crazy and reckless in the eyes of the prudent—those who balance budgets or wait for better research—they toss aside the ledger of morality and proclaim the season of jubilee.

But note that the fine must follow the good, at least in the secular terms of socialism. An earlier Eagleton might have proposed that the fine and the good are one—that paradise begins, not later, but now, in a great refusal and extravagance. Against our martial bloodlust and skin-flint prosperity, the prodigal wit of Terry Eagleton hints that the gatekeeper's faith is more relevant than ever. ■

Eugene McCarraher teaches humanities at Villanova University. He is working on *The Enchantments of Mammon: Corporate Capitalism and the American Moral Imagination*.

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Arms and the Cameraman

By Joshua Rothkopf

Readers of these pages need no introduction to Michael Moore, nor will they require any acrobatics on my part to go see *Bowling for Columbine*, which is (brace yourselves) pretty terrific.

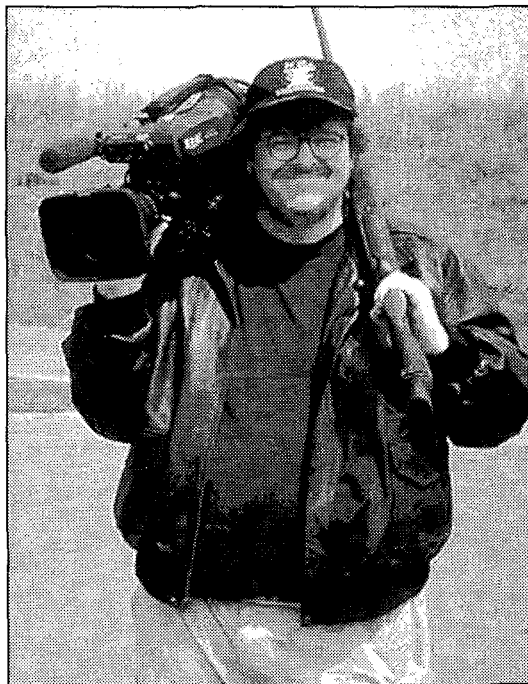
Bowling for Columbine
Written and directed by Michael Moore

That's not to say we're an uncritical bunch—we can be plenty toxic toward our own kind—but Moore's latest, about America's fatal obsession with guns, has few genuine weaknesses. They're there, to be sure: a whiff of self-congratulatory end-zone dancing here, the occasional flat-footed irony elsewhere. But so too is a ferocious (and ferociously funny) indictment of good-old American fear-mongering—the kind that's spooked us into suspending gradeschoolers for ominously waving a loaded chicken finger in the cafeteria, and led us right up to the brink of war.

What really must be discussed here are tactics: Moore will never be called a subtle documentarian, but this is why his critics consider him a dangerous man. There he is, strutting out of his Michigan bank branch hoisting a rifle (free with each new checking account), and you can tell he's pleased with himself. *Bowling for Columbine* revs up almost immediately on a raft of potent absurdities—too many for any reviewer to possibly spoil—least of all a certificate of membership to the National Rifle Association, proudly signed by the filmmaker himself, a lifetime member. If that comes as a surprise to you, wait until you see the adorable hunting dog with guns strapped to its back (the master was hospitalized), or the Lockheed-Martin employee gravely pondering the roots of school violence from the weapons factory floor in Littleton; a giant missile looms behind him.

This last bit propels Moore onto more speculative ground, a welcome develop-

ment despite the clear entertainment value of militia yahoos and ammo-selling barbershops. We cut from the missile man to a montage of covert CIA interventions—from Pinochet to Saddam to Osama—and those burning towers at the end make it a little hard to bear, especially in the mocking musical context of Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World." (This is a movie that also shows us surveillance camera footage from the Columbine massacre—not set to music,



Armed and dangerous.

thankfully.) Considering that *Bowling* will shortly be playing in malls across the country, the provocation seems close to heroic.

So it's interesting to watch Moore back off from that argument as he returns again to the question of guns. America does have a blood-soaked history, he concedes, but is it any worse than the imperial spillings of Britain or Japan? (Both countries have annual gun casualties in the mere dozens, this to our thousands.) Nor should we point the finger at victimized rocker Marilyn Manson, who pulls off the greatest shock

of his career by revealing himself to be an uncommonly thoughtful social critic. You might as well blame bowling, Moore suggests, another pastime the Columbine killers engaged in—and the very thing they did before heading off to school that April morning.

No, Moore's chosen culprit—and it's a good one—is the incessant burble of dread pouring from the nightly news and tabloids, scaring us literally to death. It's here that *Bowling* begins to resemble a grade-Z horror film, as the media madness comes in a flood: Y2K doomsday scenarios, killer "Africanized" bees, superhungry sharks, even the quiet threat of escalators ("Stairway to Danger," screams a special report).

The producer of the smash show *Cops* balks at Moore's suggestion that they go after corporate criminals, stating with brutal honesty that they could never get white-collar perps to take their shirts off. So much easier for TV to sell the roving crackhead, the black rapist, the madman dictator—and Moore never lets us forget that killings are being made, by burglar-alarm installers, gun manufacturers and Lockheed-Martin.

Compare it all to Canada's broadcasts, where politicians drone on about boring things like international diplomacy and health care, and Moore seems to have a point. How else to explain the sole gun death that occurred last year in the city of Windsor, while right across the water sits America's murder capital, Detroit? Canadians love their guns, but they don't appear to want to kill each other. They don't even lock their front doors, a rumor Moore gets great mileage out of proving, bursting unannounced into several Toronto homes.

The last house on his list belongs to God: To watch Charlton Heston blame the violence on our "mixed ethnicity" is to hear a terrible moan rise from the audience—it's Moore's greatest triumph. ■

Joshua Rothkopf can be reached at rothkopf@inthesetimes.com.

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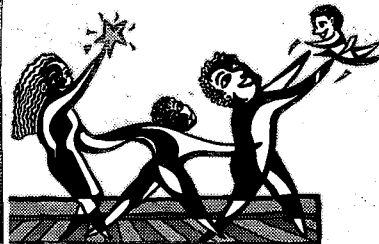
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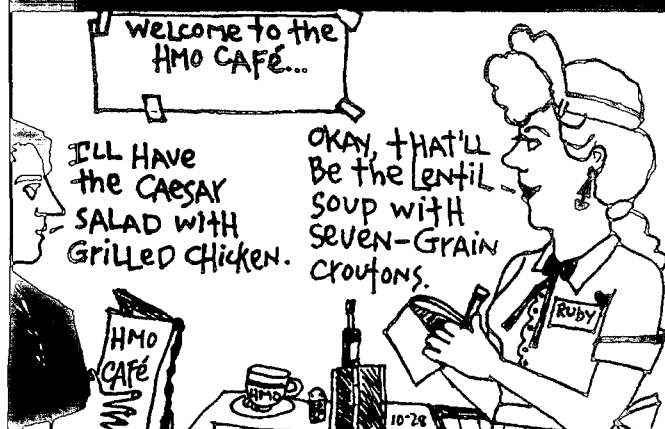
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SYLVIA



By Nicole Hollander



Partial transcript, leaked to Jim Lobe of the Inter Press Service, of a meeting recorded at Kiribatian President Teburoro Tito's private offices in Tarawa, on the evening of October 7, 2002.

Emissions of Mass Destruction

President Tito: As you all know, I have summoned you here to discuss grave matters of state and our very survival. I am, of course, referring to the continuing rise in sea level and the threat that a major storm surge could wipe us out in a matter of years, or even months. Our scientific advisers and I have been going over the latest studies, particularly those on the contribution of Alaskan glaciers to an accelerated rise in sea level, and they are very worrisome.

I also tell you that I am feeling increasingly provoked by George W. Bush hysterically nattering on about Iraq while refusing to even acknowledge that we in the South Pacific are facing certain catastrophe. Each day the seas encroach further onto our sacred shores, and each day brings no new hope that the Bush administration will change its mind and sign on to [the] Kyoto [Protocol] and begin taking serious action to curb its greenhouse gases.

I commend my brother Saufatu [Sopoanga, acting prime minister of neighboring Tuvalu] for exploring the possibility of going to the World Court or even the U.S. courts to sue Washington over its failure to cut emissions and abide by Kyoto, but I think this is a hopeless task. It will take years of litigation, and we do not have the time.

Even if we prevailed, there is no indication that Washington would abide by the judgment of the Court. I have also considered asking the U.N. Security Council to take action, but we all know that the United States has a veto there and wouldn't hesitate to use it. We have tried every diplomatic alternative, but President Bush seems absolutely impervious to reason or compassion. We cannot leave the future of peace and the security of our islands in the hands of this cruel and dangerous man. Therefore I believe we must adopt a policy of regime change in the United States.

My friends: Delay, indecision and inaction are not options for Kiribati—because they could lead to massive and sudden horror. It is clear that with global warming, entire nations and habitats will not survive, and life will become much more difficult for hundreds of millions of people all over the world. Look at Africa: The predictions are that, what with drought and so on, the continent will be less able to feed itself than even now. For much of the world, the policy being pursued in Washington amounts to criminal, possibly genocidal, neglect. Bush, Cheney and [ExxonMobil CEO Lee] Raymond threaten our existence with emissions of mass destruction. They constitute an Axis of Ecocide. The risks of waiting far outweigh the risks of action!

Vice President Tewareka Tentoa:
Hear! Hear!

Parliament Speaker Tekiree Tamuera:
Right-o, Mr. President!

President Tito:
Thank you, sirs. Are there any more questions at this point?
Hearing none, I ask that we each vote on the question and, if approved, we move the discussion to the means by which we may effect regime change in the United States.

[Tape ends.]

